

A S P E C T S O F W E S T A F R I C A N I S L A M

edited by

Daniel F. McCall

Norman R. Bennett

BOSTON UNIVERSITY PAPERS ON AFRICA

VOLUME V

AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
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INTRODUCTION

A Millennium of Islam in West Africa

Daniel F. McCall

The dozen studies which follow cover a thousand years, though the bulk of the discussion bears upon the nineteenth-century Central Sudan, with major concentration on the ijihad, commerce, military sociology, and slavery. The studies are treated through a combination of perspectives provided by the concepts and approaches developed by history and anthropology, and various related social sciences. This makes the studies neither more nor less historical or sociological; both these disciplines strive to explain changes and developments in society, though social scientists are usually less interested than historians in describing the events through which changes have come about. The contributors here have sought to fuse the materials from different disciplines, and to a large extent they have succeeded.

Africanists by and large now recognize the necessity for this interdisciplinary approach. The fusion of perspectives does not come, however, by a mere mechanical juxtaposition of data obtained on the one hand from written documents and on the other from observations and interviews of fieldwork. It is fine to recognize, as does I. M. Lewis, that, "Of course, history, where it is known or discernible, cannot be ignored -- to do so would be to limit the scope and depth of social analysis";¹ but it is not enough. The history must be sought where it is not known and not yet even discerned, and much recent fieldwork as well as archival research has begun to reveal history of areas and events that had, often, receded from the public view. History is not sought in order to give "purely historical explanations for events in terms of their antecedents."² This is an outdated, erroneous, and pejorative opinion formerly held by many social scientists unacquainted with the nature of the discipline of history, and it is surprising to find it still being expressed in some quarters. Modern historians, like social scientists, explain events in terms of a "systematic analysis of the manner in which institutions are interrelated and mutually sustaining in a given social setting";³ in fact history as well as anthropology can legitimately claim, on the basis of its scope, to be within both the humanities and the social sciences.

In recent years a number of volumes on Islam in Africa have been published. To note only some of the outstanding titles in English, there are J. S. Trimingham's Islam in West Africa (London, 1959)

1. I. M. Lewis, ed., Islam in Tropical Africa (Oxford, 1966), 3.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. Here, I have turned the author's phrase back upon him.

and A History of Islam in West Africa (London, 1962) and two surveys of the continent south of the Sahara, Islam in Tropical Africa, edited by I. M. Lewis (Oxford, 1966) and Islam in Africa edited by J. Kritzeck and W. Lewis (New York, 1969). In addition, a number of local or regional histories within Islamic areas have appeared, as, for example, Murray Last's The Sokoto Caliphate (London, 1967) and J. A. Braimah and J. R. Goody's Salaga: The Struggle for Power (London, 1967). The ready availability of these works now renders redundant any lengthy introduction ranging over substantive topics and problems. But only a few years ago the situation was quite different, so that I. M. Lewis felt constrained to devote ninety-one pages to a review of the regional distribution of Islam and the discussion of agents of Islamization and of tribal politics, law and customary practice, traditional belief and ritual in African Islamic societies, and the conditions of the modern world. His explanation of the initial acceptance of Islam in West Africa as the consequence of the Almoravid movement⁴ -- even in areas where it never penetrated -- would seem to fall back on antecedent events rather than the analysis of the inter-related institutions of the societies of the Sudan, a problem which the first two essays in this volume at least begin to attack. Nonetheless, Lewis' scholarly but readable essay is extensive in scope and succinct in statement, as well as balanced, detached, and emphatic, and any reader who misses a longer introduction here is recommended to turn to Lewis'.

Still, one observation on the nineteenth century seems to be called for here. This period was influenced by the series of movements called jihad, which were not typical of the earlier or later periods, although a misapprehension of the nature of events surrounding the Almoravids and the actions of Askia Mohammad seem, to some, to make "holy wars" endemic. Jihad, in Arabic, does not mean "holy war," but rather "striving" or "effort." The object of the jihad was to establish the Islamic moral order in society, but not necessarily by force of arms. Indeed, among their injunctions placed on believers, none of the four major legal schools imposed jihad as one of the "pillars of faith."⁵

The emergence of military-moral movements in Africa, from the eighteenth-century Futa Jalon to the late nineteenth-century Nilotic Sudan, cannot be seen in isolation from the "neo-Sufism" of the wider Islamic world, for these African jihad and/or Mahdist movements are local versions of a type of reform which occurred in Turkestan, India, and Indonesia as well as in Arabia.⁶ "Wahhabism" in Arabia did not inspire the African movements, as M. Hiskett showed,⁷ but it was an analogous phenomenon, sparked by the same forces. These movements sought social reform as well as a purification of the faith. The common elements in the world conditions of the time were the decline of Muslim states and the increasingly unfavorable trade relations between Dar-el-Islam and the rest of the world, which was coming more

4. Ibid., 16.

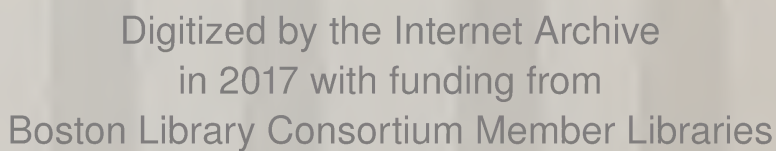
5. See Fazlur Rahman, Islam (New York, 1968), 34.

6. Ibid., 240-260.

7. Mervyn Hiskett, "Northern Nigeria," in J. Kritzeck and W. Lewis, eds., Islam in Africa (New York, 1969), 287-300.

and more under the dominance of Western commerce.⁸ These political and economic stresses caused intelligent men in Islamic societies to examine the institutions of their society and judge them in the light of their traditional values.⁹ Disturbances in the interior of Africa were more linked to the wider world than has generally been recognized. But we ought not to be surprised, for Mungo Park reported nearly two centuries ago that the "trading Moors" conspired against his progress as they were all convinced that he was spying.¹⁰ Probably they feared that European traders would try to displace them, as they knew had transpired in some other Muslim areas.

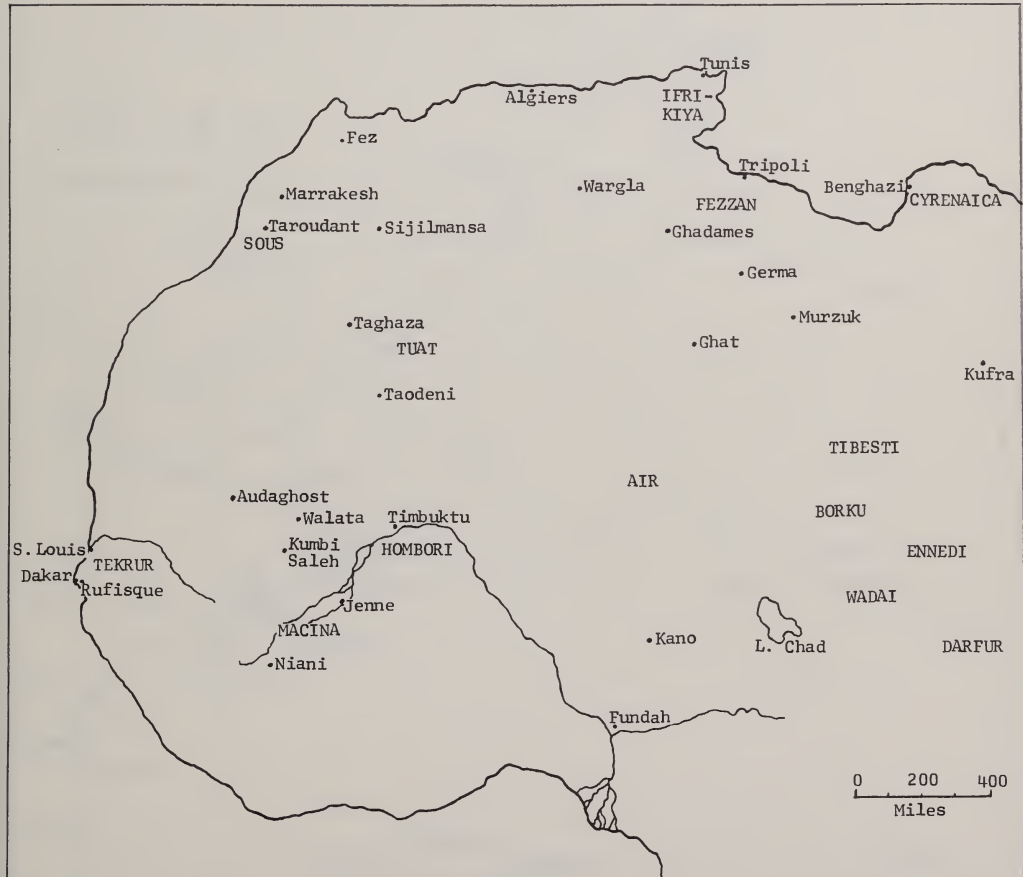
8. Compare with the characterization of the nineteenth century in the introduction to N. R. Bennett, ed., Leadership in Eastern Africa. Six Political Biographies (Boston, 1968).
9. The fiscal system and the system of social stratification quickly came under attack. See D. F. McCall, "Muslims and Non-Muslims in West African States in the Nineteenth Century," in a volume edited by B. Obichere being prepared for publication.
10. Mungo Park, Travels in the Interior of Africa (Edinburgh, 1860), 294-295; see also 203, 112.



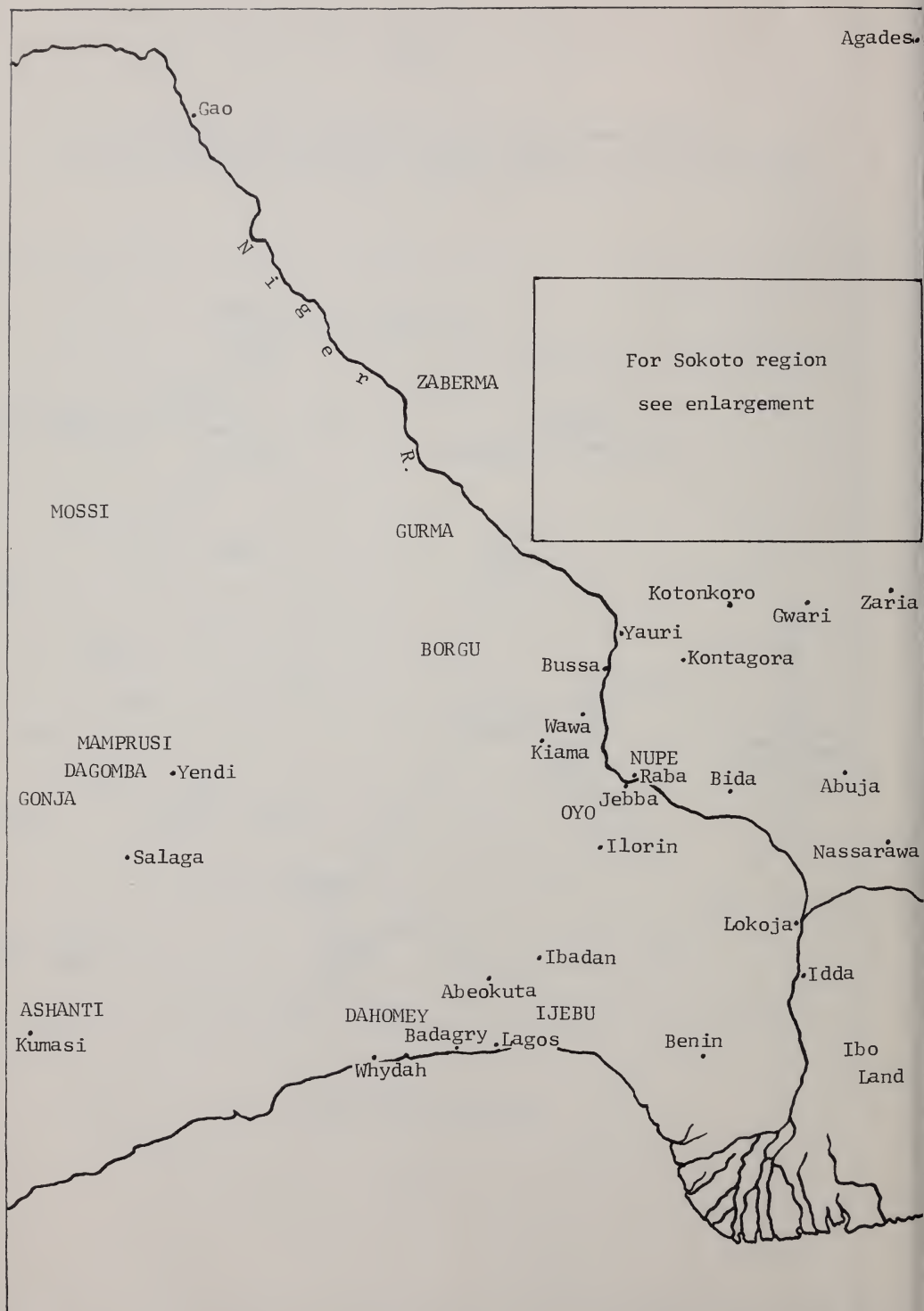
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MAPS

The four maps provided in this volume are intended only to give the location of places mentioned throughout the text and are given without regard to chronology.



NORTH AND WEST AFRICA





N I G E R - B E N U E - L A K E C H A D



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Miles

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Daniel F. McCall is Professor of Anthropology and Research Associate in the African Studies Center at Boston University. He is author of Africa in Time Perspective and a number of articles on historical problems and on urbanization and contemporary aspects of Africa, as well as on African art and oral literature.

Norman R. Bennett is Professor of History and Research Associate in the African Studies Center at Boston University. His latest publication is Mirambo of Tanzania (Oxford University Press).

Nehemia Levtzion is a Senior Lecturer in African History and Chairman of the African Studies Department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has visited Africa several times and did field research in Ghana in 1963-1964. He is the author of Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa (Oxford, 1968) and the forthcoming Ancient Ghana and Mali, as well as of articles in numerous journals.

Anne Pardo is a candidate for the Ph.D. in history at Boston University. Her area of specialization is West Africa, particularly Nigeria; her interest in that field having been aroused by a two-year stay in Lagos, under the sponsorship of the Ford Foundation, as technical adviser to the National Library.

B. G. Martin has taught at Manchester University, the University of Ghana, and at Ibadan in Nigeria. At present he is at Indiana University, Bloomington, where he teaches various Islamic and African subjects.

Richard Hull is Assistant Professor of African History at New York University. In 1966 he undertook doctoral field research in Northern Nigeria and Niger under a Fulbright-Hays fellowship, and has spent three months in 1970 in East and Central Africa studying traditional architecture.

Lucie G. Colvin spent from 1968 to 1970 in Europe and Africa collecting archival and oral material on diplomacy among precolonial African kingdoms, especially Kajor in Senegal and Asante in Ghana. Much of this work is incorporated in her dissertation, "Kajor and Its Relations with Saint-Louis du Senegal, 1763-1861."

Louis Brenner is Assistant Professor of History and Research Associate in the African Studies Center at Boston University. His forthcoming book, The Shehus of Kukawa, is a history of nineteenth-century Bornu.

Joseph P. Smaldone is a Captain in the U.S. Marine Corps, with which he is serving four years after completing his doctorate in history at Northwestern University. His primary research interest is African military history.

Allan Meyers is presently engaged in research on the trans-Saharan slave trade and the slave army of Mawlay Isma'il. His fieldwork is in southeastern Morocco.

Lucy Behrman is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. She has done fieldwork in Guinea and Senegal and in Santiago, Chile, and is the author of various articles as well as Muslim Brotherhoods and Politics in Senegal (Cambridge, Mass., 1970).

Alfred G. Gerteiny is Associate Professor of African and Middle Eastern History at the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut. He is the author of Mauritania (New York, 1967) and a co-author of Islam in Africa (New York, 1969). His chapter in this volume was originally prepared for presentation at the Second International Congress of Africanists, Dakar, Senegal, December 1967.

Lyndon Harries is Professor of African Languages and Literature at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is presently Visiting Professor in the Department of Swahili at the University of Dar es Salaam. He is the author of many books and articles on African languages and literature, including Swahili Poetry, Swahili Texts, and Poems from Kenya.

PART I

THE EARLY CENTURIES



CHAPTER 1

ISLAMIZATION OF THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL SUDAN IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Daniel F. McCall

The history of Islam in Northern and Western Africa is a single continuum. In this paper we are concerned only with these parts of the continent. Islam in East Africa articulates more with the movements in the Indian Ocean region than with other parts of Africa.

Islam moved into northern and western Africa in a series of spasmodic thrusts. There have been four such pulsations to date. Each was completed in less than a century. The first was in the seventh century A.D.; the second in the eleventh; the third in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth; and the fourth in the first six decades of the twentieth century.

Two of these periods have been essentially military: the conquests of the seventh and the jihads of the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. The other two were principally periods of peaceful proselytization -- the twentieth century, under European colonial rule, completely so, and the eleventh century, despite the spectacular case of the Almoravids (which dominates the literature) was for the majority of the cases a time of peaceful conversion.

The seventh century spread was restricted to the Maghrib and was part of the original expansion of Islam beyond the Arabian peninsula. In the eleventh century the rulers and merchants of the more important states in the Western and Central Sudan adopted, at least nominally, the religion introduced from the north via the trans-Saharan trade routes. The mass of the people in these states seem to have persisted in their old beliefs and behavior. This is indicated, for example, in the persistence, contrary to the principles of Islam, of the ritual-related plastic arts.

The jihad movements of the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries resulted in some extension of Islam to previously non-Muslim peoples, but it was more effective in bringing about the increasing involvement of the ordinary classes of people in the religion of the ruling and commercial classes.

Vertical as well as horizontal reinforcement of Islam was facilitated by the increase of literacy and the ease and safety of travel under colonial rule (even when the European administrators were hostile to the religion as was frequently the case in the former A.O.F.).¹

1. Some observers predict a post-independence expansion of Islam which will sweep the continent. The premise is that Islam

The first steps in the advancement of Islam into Africa were very rapid.² From 641 to 717 A.D. conquest of the Maghrib and Iberia was accomplished, but the area to the south of the desert which bordered the Jezerat al-Maghrib was to wait three more centuries, from the eighth to the eleventh, before there would be noticeable penetration of Islam. In this paper we will be concerned with the conditions which determined the delay and the change of conditions which later furthered the diffusion of Islamic religion and culture.

is handicapped because it is viewed as having been allied with colonialism; with the latter out of the way, the former will soon be crowded out. Tribal religions are ignored and considered to lack the resources to survive in modern society. Thus far, however, neither Christianity nor tribal religions have faced any new obstacles and Islam has not increased its rate of expansion. Politics in the modern world are not necessarily associated with religion and if they become so in some situations there is no certainty that the effect would be continent-wide; rather the chances are against it -- despite whatever pan-Africanist sentiments may be involved.

2. The fall of Alexandria in 641 A.D. was the prelude to the Arab occupation of Egypt, which was soon accomplished. A raid into the Byzantine province of Africa in 647 against the Patrician Gregory, who had revolted against Constantinople, destroyed the army of this would-be emperor; the Arabs did not stay in the west this time, but returned to Egypt. They went back again to raid in 654, but it was not until 670 that a large force from Egypt built Kairwan as a fortified and permanent settlement. In 681 Ogba appeared with his army at Tangier, but he had over-extended his forces and found himself faced by a Berber-Byzantine combination. His forces were attacked even in Kairwan, which was taken in 683, but despite the defeat and death of Ogba, the Arab city was retaken by Zohair ibn Quais. It was not secure until the Byzantine African capital, Carthage, was captured in 695.

The Arabs pushed west again, reaching the Atlantic under the leadership of Musa ibn Nosair in 704. The consolidation of this territory was the ambition and despair of many rulers; there were rebellions and heresies, yet the Islamic thrust had enough energy in 711 for the invasion of Spain, which had already been raided in 675. By 717, the whole Iberian peninsula was under Muslim rule, and in 720 Narbonne was taken and held till 759. The conquests beyond the Pyrenees could not be held, and after the defeat of Abder-Rahman near Poitiers in 732, the Muslims found the Frankish forces too much for them.

In emphasizing the rapidity of the Arab conquest of North Africa, a comparison is made to the rate of progress of other invaders, of whom only the Romans matched the Arabs in mastering all of North Africa, but the Roman expansion was much slower. The emphasis on rapidity, which was characteristic of the Arab advance everywhere, does not contradict G. Marçais' point in La Berberie Musulman et l'Orient au Moyen Age (page 27) that the conquest of North Africa was for Islam the most laborious of any. Marçais is comparing the progress of the Arabs in the Middle East and in North Africa; we are comparing the conquest of North Africa by its various conquerers.

Why was there such a long delay? Was the Sahara an effective barrier? Were the energies of the original thrust exhausted? Were the Muslims not interested in the south? Perhaps the answer is yes to each of these -- at least to some extent. Certainly the Arabs knew how to survive in the desert. They were better equipped in this respect than any of the previous rulers of the southern Mediterranean littoral, but, having swarmed out of one desert, they were perhaps not anxious to swarm back into another -- the green lands proved more attractive. Some tentatives, it is true, were attempted across the desert, but the forces were inadequate and the attempts were not continued.³ The Sahara was occupied by tribes which were equally adapted to those hardy conditions and who had good fighting men; furthermore, the local tribes knew the location of the water points which the invaders would have to discover if, rather than merely raiding, they were to remain.

Also, it is clear that serious rifts in the body politic of the new Islamic state appeared before the Maghrib could be considered reasonably subdued. Yet this did not prevent them from continuing to embark on campaigns against Iberians and Franks.

The incoming Arabs immediately learned what many local North Africans had long known: that there was gold in the Sudan; the attempts to penetrate militarily to that land were in part at least a response to this attraction. However, the gold was coming north in any case, to Sijilmassa and to Wargla, and so they could be content, for the moment while their forces were so widely extended, to control the northern termini of the trade routes.

But more important than these factors were the pre-existing political systems. The Byzantine Roman Empire and the Sassanian Persian Empire had their war-torn boundary just to the north of Arabia. The Arabs were neighbors of both, traded with both, and sometimes raided and were raided by both. The Arabs were particularly well placed to assess the strength or weakness of each of the contending empires. When it became obvious that these empires had fought each other until both were weakened and rent by internal dissensions, the Arabs burst in from the south and took the fruits of victory in most of the extent of the two empires, and nowhere did they go beyond the former Roman or Persian authority or sphere of influence. This was an enormous area and population to digest, and the Muslims were not prepared for civil administration, which they left in the hands of the cadre of administrators of the preceding governments. Thus the old frontiers tended to be perpetuated.

It was easy to become involved in a political contest, such as that of Count Julian of Ceuta and the Visigoth King Roderic, for example, because they were part of the old state system, but the states

3. In 736 A.D. See J. S. Trimingham, A History of Islam in West Africa (London, 1962), 44, n. 5.
4. The earliest extant reference to Ghana, that of al-Fazari in the eighth century, dubs it "the land of gold." This is evidence that it was not Arabs who pioneered the trans-Saharan trade; it was in existence when they arrived. Some economic historians of the ancient Mediterranean lands, such as Rostotzeff, conclude that trade existed though the evidence is meager; others, e.g. Warming-ton, tend to discount it. I have argued in favor of the first position in "The Traditions of the Founding of Sijilmassa and Ghana," Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, V, 1 (1961), 3-32.

to the south of the Sahara had been merely distant trading connections and not political allies or enemies.

When Islam does finally establish itself to the south of the desert, there is again a rapid advancement along a broad front. From west to east, Tekrur before the third decade, the Lemtuna and Godala of Mauritania in the next decade, Malel (the precursor of Sundiata's Mali?) about mid-century, Ghana in 1076, the Songhai on the Middle Niger River in 1009-1010, and Bornu around Lake Chad between 1085 and 1097 were all brought within the fold of Islam.⁵ These peoples constitute the major part of the Muslim peoples of the Sudan in the following centuries. Only the Hausa in the fourteenth century make an important addition to this list of conversions. The conversion of Jenné a century before the Hausa did not affect such a sizeable population.

It seems to me a peculiar and notable thing that every important state of the time in the Sudan from the Atlantic to Lake Chad was Islamized in the eleventh century and then, aside from some minor "seepage" or diffusion from these states, there is virtually no further success for this proselytizing religion until the latter part of the eighteenth century.⁶ (Hausa states were weak and poor in the eleventh century, probably under the shadow of Bornu, and not yet participating directly in the caravan trade to the north.)

5. All of these dates are open to question. Al-Muhallabi (A.D. 985), quoted by Yaqut, says of the Songhai kingdom, "Their king makes a profession of Islam before his subjects, and most of them follow his example." On the other extreme, Mahmud al-Kati states that "The Islamization of the people of Gao took place between 471 and 475 (1078 and 1082)" (Tarikh al-Fattash, p. 333). The date A.H. 400/1009-10 comes from As-Sa'di (Tarikh as-Sudan, p. 3). The total difference is three years less than a century, but the difference between al-Muhallabi and As-Sa'di is only fourteen years. The former does not mention the name of the king and there is no way of knowing whether this was Kossoi and that, therefore, the discrepancy is one of calculation of dates, or whether the reference to the earlier date might be to a predecessor of Kossoi. Dates are so troublesome in this literature, one might choose this as the more likely explanation, but as conversion is not likely to come without some preparation, the idea of a predecessor making a "profession" in a partial fashion is believable. There appears to have been a gradual progression in Kanem, cf. the mahram of Umme Jilma, Sir Richard Palmer, The Bornu Sahara and Sudan, 14-15. The latest date, that of Kati, must be doubted because it is later than al-Bakri (1067), who mentions the gifts of the seal, sword, and Koran from the Amir al-Musulmi. As-Sa'di, therefore, seems to be more consistent with our other information. However, the precision of dates is not important here, and the validity of each will not be examined. No matter which date is accepted for a particular state, the situation remains the same: every important state in the Western and Central Sudan adopted Islam in a period which extended over approximately a century.
6. None of the histories of the region or the general histories of Africa explicitly emphasize the importance of the eleventh century in this respect. It is deductable from the information given, but

This episodic pattern of expansion seems to call for some discussion. It is possible but not likely that there was no connection between the various conversions in the eleventh century series. Two, or even three, conversions at the same period might be accepted as a coincidence, but five conversions (not counting Ghana's, which was by force) in such short order in more or less contiguous areas does not seem like coincidence, especially when this was followed by a lapse of time with little proselytization -- or at least with little results.

One might be tempted to suspect that behind the apparent regularity of the four movements of advance interspersed by periods of quiescence there was some general social process, or even "law" such as social scientists continually hope to find. This does not appear to be the case as each of the advances seems to be powered by different forces. Yet we can learn a good deal about "society" as well as "history" by studying the eleventh-century social change and religious conversion in Sudan; but since Islam came in this instance from the north, we will briefly look at the circumstances of the prior Islamization of the Maghrib.

The first thing to examine is the nature of the force that carried the Arabs to victory. It may seem an unnecessary statement of the obvious to say that it was the force of religion, but if we examine the following statements by Henri Pirenne, we will see exactly what that meant in this military context.

When Mohammad died in 632, there was as yet no sign of the peril which was to manifest itself, in so overwhelming a fashion a few years later. No measures had been taken [by Constantinople] to defend the frontier. It is evident that whereas the Germanic menace had always attracted the attention of the Emperors, the Arab onslaught took them by surprise.⁷

disguised by the organization of the narrative which is usually to deal seriatim with the various states of the Sudan for periods encompassing several centuries. The following histories were checked to compare their treatment of this topic: R. Cornevin, Histoire des Peuples de l'Afrique (Paris, 1960); R. and M. Cornevin, Histoire de l'Afrique (Paris, 1964); J. D. Fage, Introduction to the History of West Africa (Cambridge, 1962); L. C. D. Joos, Brève Histoire de l'Afrique noire (Paris, 1964); D. T. Niane and J. Surat-Canale, Histoire de l'Afrique Occidentale (Conakry, 1960); R. Oliver and J. D. Fage, A Short History of Africa (Baltimore, 1962); R. Rotberg, A Political History of Tropical Africa (New York, 1965); Trimmingham, History of Islam; D. L. Wiedner, A History of Africa South of the Sahara (New York, 1964). Joos (page 25) comes close to making the point when he wrote: "Dès le milieu du XI^e siècle, l'Afrique semble avoir dépassé le crise politique et religieuse qui marque le fin du X^e et la première moitié du XI^e siècle." But he does not discuss the "political and religious crises." Rather, having used this as a point of departure goes on to consider later periods. There are a few other statements of other authors which indicate that they may have an implicit knowledge of this point, but no one makes a clear statement that there is anything more than coincidence in the clustering of dates of conversion of the various states.

7. H. Pirenne, Mohammad and Charlemagne (New York, 1957), 148.

He then describes the "overwhelming onslaught" in Asia and North Africa, concluding with these words.

All this may doubtless be explained by the fact that the invasion was unexpected, by the disorder of the Byzantine armies, disorganized and surprised by a new method of fighting, by the religious and national discontent of the Monophysites and Nestorians of Syria, to whom the Empire had refused any concessions, and of the Coptic Church in Egypt, and by the weakness of the Persians. But all of these reasons are insufficient to explain so complete a triumph. The intensity of the results were out of all proportion to the numerical strength of the conquerors⁸ [underlining mine].

Pirenne then contrasts the Germanic invasions with those of the Arabs, in which the former peoples were absorbed into Roman civilization and the latter preserved their distinctiveness. There is only one explanation, he asserts, and "it is of a moral order."⁹

Put succinctly then, until Mohammad provided a single and ultimate authority that could override the "confused conflicts of the tribes,"¹⁰ the peoples of the Arabian peninsula, whether of the desert or of the towns, remained divided and weak; but, united in submission to Allah, they not only had the strength of their combined numbers but a psychological unity and the strength of conviction which could carry them to extraordinary feats of exertion and endurance.

This fine fighting organization had to have a goal. Of course, this was to impose Islam on the peoples of the world, but it is obvious that the peoples of the "two Empires which marched with Arabia, the Roman and the Persian," received the first attention. If religion was responsible for the unification of the Arabs, economics was much more important in the selection of their military objectives. The Arabs were long familiar with commerce. Mecca itself was a caravan stop, and Mohammad had been a camel driver in the trade caravans as had many of his followers, or they had guarded or raided them. The Arabs had lived for centuries as poor neighbors of the rich empires to the north. Booty, more than proselytization, drew the Arabs out of the desert. As George Marçais has suggested:

Reading the chronicles leaves us with the impression that the hope for temporal goods prevailed, for most of them [the conquering Arabs], over the desire to die in combat for the Faith and to be revived before God "with their sabers on their shoulders."¹²

So it is not surprising that the Muslims in North Africa were at first more oriented toward the Mediterranean to the north than

8. Ibid., 150.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 148.

11. Ibid. But the impact was felt beyond the Arab conquests: Charlemagne's empire was the principal result, as Pirenne saw it, but J. Brønsted in The Vikings (Hammondsworth, 1960), Ch. 1, sees the Viking raids as a further consequence.

12. Georges Marçais, La Berberie Musulman et l'Orient au Moyen Age (Paris, 1956), 22. In this and all the subsequent French works the translations are my own.

toward the desert to the south. Iberia, Sicily, Sardinia, Italy, southern France, and the Aegean, all of which they attacked, were within the limes of the Empire; the desert to the south was not. Once there, they had to try to hold North Africa; the Arab land army had to develop a supporting maritime force to prevent Byzantine reinforcements. The people of North Africa were already in close inter-relationship with those of Europe, and the political contests invited Muslim intervention. Furthermore, the small Arab forces, soon reinforced by converted Berbers who had lived within the Empire, naturally took over their regional orientation. Thus the Arab attraction to the Empire was reinforced by the North African experience. The conquest of the Maghrib may be characterized, then, in a not too oversimplified fashion, as a systematic quest for booty by a force of piratical nomads who were unified by the disciplinary force of religion.

The winning of the Sudan to Islam has two faces -- one is that of the earlier type -- the Almoravids; and the other is the prosyletization by traders. The first face is reasonably well known; it is recounted in one fashion or another in all histories of West Africa which cover that period. And this conquest of Ghana by the Almoravids is one of the best known facts of African history. One historian has even suggested that 1066 for the Western Sudan has the order of significance that 1066 has for England. The great attention given to this story and the relative neglect usually accorded the less spectacular and less detailed stories of the Islamization of other Sudanese states, I feel, distorts our picture of the period. The Almoravid history is a parallel of the Arab conquests; the others are a new element. Let us then first consider the Almoravids.

The Almoravids, Tekrur, Ghana, Susu, and Mali

The Berbers of the Western Sahara repeat the pattern of the Arabs in the Arabian Desert. The Lemtuna and other Sanhaja tribes had lived in the Sahara for some centuries, although they may not have arrived on Ghana's borders until after the disturbance caused by the arrival of the Arabs in northern Africa; like the Arab tribes before Mohammad, the Berbers were divided and weak. Generally, they were ineffective against the states to the north -- Sijilmassa, Fez, and Tahert -- and to the south -- Ghana. They were less prosperous; their eyes looked with envy on their richer neighbors. Eventually Islam gave them, as it had to the Arabs, the cohesion to effect the conquest of these neighbors.

The Lemtuna Berbers had, before conversion to Islam, achieved a momentary unity in the eighth century:

Already, at the period when the dynasty founded by the Umayyad prince, Abd-er Rahman-ibn-Moawia-ed-Dakhell¹³ reigned in Spain, they [the Lemtuna] formed a powerful nation which obeyed hereditary kings, of whom the memory is preserved to our own time.¹⁴

13. Abd-er Rahman-Ibn-Moawia-ed-Dakhel established himself at Cordova in 756 A.D.
14. Ibn Khaldun, Histoire des Berbères, translated by M. DeSlane (Paris, 1835), II, 65. This is an interesting reference to oral traditions. It is too bad that Ibn Khaldun does not inform us how he came to knowledge of it.

The Lemtuna unity was apparently accomplished under Urtentac. One of his successors, Tilutan, who died in 222 (837), made some incursion into the Sudan. According to Ibn-Abi-Zera, as cited by Ibn Khaldun:

He subjected the countries of that region and forced the Blacks to pay tribute. He marched surrounded by one hundred thousand fighting men mounted on mehari camels.¹⁵

Ibn-Abi-Zera's account is supported by Al-Yaqubi's Kitab al Buldan, written in the late ninth century, which says that the western caravan route from Sijilmassa was dominated by the Sanhadja.

It was probably at this time that the Berbers became established at Awdoghost. If, as W. D. Cooley asserts (it is not clear on what evidence) Awdoghost had once been a capital of Ghana,¹⁶ then the incursions of the Lemtuna at that time must have been considerable. However, the Berbers were unable to maintain their unity. Ibn-Abi-Zera continues:

His death [i.e. Tilutan's] occurred in 222 (837). His successor, Ilettan, died in 287 (900); Temim, son and successor of the latter, reigned until the year 306 (918-9), when he was killed by the Sanhadja. Then division took place among the Lemtuna.¹⁷

Who the murderer was is not precisely indicated, since the Lemtuna are a part of the Sanhadja, but presumably he was a non-Lemtuna.

After Temim, division rent the nation and this state of affairs lasted for one hundred twenty years. Abu-Abd-Allah, son of Tifaout and generally known by the name Narecht, mounted the throne then and rallied all parties. He was a man full of virtue and religion; he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and, after a reign of three years, he lost his life in a military expedition. His son-in-law, Yahya, son of Ibrahim-al-Guedali, then took command.¹⁸

15. Ibid.

16. W. D. Cooley, Negroland of the Arabs, 2nd ed. (London, 1966), 6. Cooley mistakenly has the city in Ghana's possession until the time of the Almoravids.

17. Cited by Ibn Khaldun, Histoire, II, 66.

18. Ibid. Alfred G. Gerteiny, in Mauritania (New York, 1967), 23-25, places conversion about 1020 and renders the Islamic name as 'Abdallah abu Muhammad and the Berber name as Tarcina, and his reign as 1020-1023 A.D. His successor is given as Yahya ibn Brahim el Djodaly. The latter is, of course, identical with "Yahya, son of Ibrahim-al-Guedali" as we have rendered it from DeSlane's translation of Ibn Khaldun, and the other Islamic name is not too variant to assume a probable identity (Abu-Abd-Allah and 'Abdallah abu Muhammad), but what is the source of Tarcina? Gerteiny says this is the name given to him by informants in Mauritania (personal communication). Whether this comes from essentially oral traditions or from a literary tradition independent of Ibn Khaldun, however, is not clear. Presumably, however, Tarcina is to be assumed to be equatable with Narecht.

Thus, from 919 to 1038 there was a period of internal divisions for the Lemtuna, and in 1038-1039 Narecht was apparently converted, taking the name of Abu-Abd-Allah; note that his father has a Berber name and that he himself, even after his conversion, is still "generally known" by his Berber name. The fact that he was killed in battle three years after taking office may be coincidental, but it may mean that he had opposition from some segments of his people to the new religion. At any rate, by the name of his successor, it is evident that he was succeeded by a Moslem.

According to another historian, cited unnamed by Ibn Khaldun, there was a ruler of the Lemtuna between Temim and Narecht, who succeeded in reuniting the tribes. This was Tinezwa, who

reigned over all the desert, and that in the fourth century of the hejira, at the period when the Umayyad sovereigns, Abd-er-Rahman-en-Nacer and, later, his son Al-Hakem-al-Mostancer, governed Spain, and when the Fatimid caliphs, Obeid-Allah and his son Abu-l'Cacem, governed in Ifrikiya. He marched at the head of a hundred thousand warriors mounted on mehari camels. His domain extended over a region of two months travel and as wide. Twenty Negro kings recognized his authority and payed him taxes. His sons ruled after him, and then the unity of the nation was shattered so that each fraction and each tribe had a king.¹⁹

The citation of these rulers as contemporaries of Tinezwa place him in the earlier part of the fourth century of the hejira. It is noteworthy that Tinezwa does not have a Moslem name and is to be presumed to be a pagan.

Thus Lemtuna power was dominant for at least two reigns -- that of Tiloutan in the ninth century and that of Tinezwa in the tenth century -- over some of the peoples of the Western Sudan and even made inroads into the territory of Ghana, but in each case the successors soon lost control of these conquests. These confederations were, however, preliminary to the great confederation that was to come, the Almoravids.

The leaders of the Almoravids are said to have come from the same line of kings,²⁰ but the exact descent is obscured by the manner in which it is reported.²¹ Yahya, apparently after his marriage (at

19. Ibid. The numbers 100,000 when used for warriors, two months travel for extent of realm, and twenty conquered kings, are probably all merely conventional figures to indicate a considerable number.

20. Ibid., 65.

21. Thus Yahya-Ibn-Ibrahim, who sets in motion the events that led to this religious movement, is said to be a Goddela. He was son-in-law of Narecht, who succeeded after the latter's death. Yahya is said to have been the grandson of Telaguain, the grandson of Urtentac, the presumable founder of the royal line. How then was Yahya a Banu Goddalu and not a Lemtuna? He may have been the son of Telaguain's daughter by a Goddala and probably succeeded due to the lack of any surviving sons of brothers of Narecht, for otherwise these would have had precedence over him. (Even if one

least it is related subsequently in the text), made the hajj. This was in 440 (1048-1049), ten years after the 120 years of disorder specified by Ibn-Abi-Zera; so that at this time Yahya may be understood to have maintained effective control of the nuclear Lemtuna region which Narecht had established. The old conquests had, on the other hand, been largely lost. Page summarizes the struggle between the Lemtuna and Ghana in the ninth and tenth centuries in this way: "Ghana was eventually victorious, and by the end of the tenth century it seems that Awdoghost was paying tribute to Ghana."²² And Trimmingham writes that after the death of Temim, "Gana became the dominant power, gradually extending her rule."²³

Yahya did not himself make any recorded incursion into the Sudan, but he was the agency by which the nominal Islam of the desert Berbers became intensified. He brought back from Sijilmassa a religious preceptor, Ibn-Yazin, also a Berber but not a Lemtuna.

At the death of Yahya, there were "new dissensions,"²⁴ tribesmen refused to heed the instructions of Ibn Yazin, and he retired to a ribat, or fortified retreat, with his followers.²⁵ These included

were to assume that these desert Berbers were then matrilineal, as are their neighbors the Tuareg, the claim to office through a female would only be valid if this office specifically, as well as descent, was traditionally transmitted in this manner -- that would be to say that Urtentac had obtained his position that way, but he appears to have been an innovator and the office would not therefore have existed before him. The whole discussion is in reference to previous male rulers with no mention of the distaff side, and allowing for the patrilineal bias of the Islamic writers it is most probable that the office, whatever may have been true of other aspects of the society, was transmitted patrilineally.)

This polity consisted basically of two desert tribes. Its instability is partly the traditional Berber social organization, but partly, no doubt, the rivalry of the tribes. The situation would make intertribal dynastic marriages a strong likelihood. With or without the right to succession of the offspring of such marriages to succeed to royal office, it is possible that this succession was viewed by some as usurpation. He may have been the leader of a Moslem faction to whom was opposed a pagan claimant with a legitimate claim. Whether there was any legitimist opposition to him cannot be determined from our sources. At any rate, Yahya married into the family of Urtentac. This could not give him or his sons any greater legitimacy in patrilineal Islamic society, but it might win for him the support of those who were uncertain in their allegiance and would strengthen the ties with those to whom he was already related in the uterine line.

22. J. D. Fage, "Ancient Ghana: A Review of the Evidence," Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, III, 2 (1957), 85.

23. Trimmingham, History of Islam, 21-22.

24. Ibn Khaldun, Histoire, II, 68.

25. These dissensions have always been assumed to be due to the strictness of Ibn Yahya's teaching, but the shortness of the time with which he overcame the objections to him does not allow much chance for proselytization of the opposition. I suggest it is more likely that we have here a contest over the question of succession and that Islam was involved in this argument, but not as the primary issue.

two brothers, Abu-Bekr and Yahya-Ibn-Omar-Ibn-Telagauin, whom Ibn Khaldun describes only as Lemtuna chiefs. Who ruled the Lemtuna while these chiefs were in the ribat, we are not told. Possibly the dissension was so great that there was no ruler, or there may have been a Goddala ruler. Since the brothers eventually succeeded to power, we are interested in what relationship they had, if any, to their predecessor, Yahya. We are not informed on this point. Since their father's name was Omar, they were obviously not sons of Yahya. They may have been somehow related, since they claim descent from a Telagauin, as did Yahya. This seemingly deliberate obscurity here permits us to entertain the possibility that these brothers may have been the legitimist contenders against the Goddala branch.²⁶ The defensive location of the ribat was strengthened not only by the surrounding water but by neighboring Tekrur, which was already Muslim -- it has been suggested that its conversion was related to its restlessness under Ghana's hegemony. Ibn Yazin doubtless expected military aid from his Tekruri co-religionists if it was needed.

When Ibn Yazin had a thousand followers in his religio-military brotherhood, he set out to bring the Lemtuna, Goddala, and Messufa to embrace his more stringent form of Islam. That he was able to do so is testimony both to the inspiration he had given his men of the ribat and to the degree of dissension of the tribes. Yahya-ibn-Omar was given the title of amir.²⁷ All of this must have transpired in a very short time, for Ibn-Yazin arrived in 1048-1049 and Yahya-ibn-Omar took Awdoghost in 1054,²⁸ dying the following year. Yahya-ibn-Ibrahim could not therefore have lived long after his return from Mecca, and the training period in the ribat could not have lasted longer than three or four years.

Abu-Bekr succeeded his brother, and the next year turned his attention northward. He invaded the Sous and captured Massa and Taroudant. Ibn Yazin was killed in battle in 450 (1058), but the conquest continued. Sijilmassa was the first capital of the Almoravids.²⁹ They now controlled the northern terminus of the western gold route and the desert through which it ran, but a dispute between the Lemtuna and Messufa threatened this new empire. Abu-Bekr turned south to meet this threat in 453 (1061), leaving his cousin Yusuf Ibn-Tashfin in command in the north. The latter went on to take Fez and defeat the Hammadites from the Central Maghrib, while Abu-Bekr succeeded in healing the dissension by uniting the tribes against Ghana.

Wishing thus to give free rein to their ardor, he led them against the infidel nations of the Sudan, and carried his victorious arms to the distance of ninety days journey beyond the country of the Almoravids.³⁰

26. These brothers were Lemtuna and later had to contend with Goddala revolts; but they also had trouble with the Messufa who were also members of the confederacy (if we can use this term), so the revolts do not of themselves indicate more than normal divisiveness. Yet the probability remains that the Ibn Omar were legitimate claimants and that there was a rival Goddala branch.

27. Ibn Khaldun, Histoire, II, 69.

28. Fage, "Ancient Ghana," 86.

29. D'Herbellelot, Bibliothèque Orientale (Paris, 1697).

30. Ibn Khaldun, Histoire, II, 72.

The date of the defeat of Ghana is given as 1076, so that Abu-Bekr may have been campaigning in the south for fifteen years before this event.³¹ By that time, Yusuf Ibn-Tashfin had gained control of all the Maghrib-al-Aksa and was considering the invasion of Spain and of the Central Maghrib. When Abu-Bekr returned north, his cousin refused to return to him the authority which he exercised. There were thenceforth two Almoravid kingdoms, the northern consisting of the Maghrib-al-Aksa, and, subsequently, Muslim Spain, and the southern consisting of the western Sahara and part of the western Sudan. But the southern kingdom did not last long. In 1087, Abu-Bekr was killed while trying to suppress a revolt of his Berber tribes. Thereafter, no one in the desert succeeded in healing this breach, nor was the northern group of Almoravids able to bring the desert tribes under its domination.

Eventually, the southern Sanhadja came under the control of the kings of the Sudan states. Ibn Khaldun says:

As for those who remained in the desert, nothing changed in their manner of living and until today they remain divided and disunited because of the diversity of their sentiments and their interests. Subjected to the authority of kings of the Blacks [Melek-es Soudan], they pay the impost (khradj) and furnish contingents to his armies.³²

This reverse was typical of the fortunes of war in this region. The peoples of the desert and those of the savannah strove constantly to dominate each other. The people of the Sudan controlled the desert to the approaches to Wargla in the time of Mansa Musa,³³ but in the time of his great-grandson after the profligate Djata had squandered wealth and lost territory, the king of Mali had to send an army against Takedda (which he took).³⁴ At other times, the Berbers intervened in the affairs of the cities along the Niger and even moved south of the river. In the contest between the desert and the savannah, the weakness of one invited the attack of the other; at some times the desert was controlled by the Sudanese states, and at other times the Sudanese states were pillaged by the desert confederations.

The period of Almoravid domination of Ghana did not exceed eleven years. Yet Ghana never fully recovered hegemony over its old subjects other than some of the Soninke, and eventually Ghana itself fell under the control of the Susu and then of the Malinke. In part, this may have been because Ghana was already in decline. Ibn Khaldun informs us that:

The kingdom of Ghana had fallen into its final enfeeblement toward the period when the empire of the wearers of the litham (the Almoravids) began to become powerful; also, this latter people, who lived to the north of Ghana . . . extended their

31. Others have interpreted the southern campaign as one of short duration, after which Abu-Bekr returned to Morocco, again went south after being repulsed by his cousin, and only subsequently turned his attention to Ghana.

32. Ibn Khaldun, Histoire, II, 104.

33. Ibid., 112.

34. Ibid., 115.

domination over the Blacks, devastated their territory and pillaged their property. Having subjected them to head-tax, they imposed tribute and brought a large number of them to embrace Islam. The authority of the kings of Ghana was extinguished, their neighbors, the Susu, subjugated this country and reduced the inhabitants to slavery.³⁵

This paragraph telescopes at least three centuries; Ibn Khaldun combines the later consequences of the defeat with the statement of Ghana's previous weakness. Al-Bakri specifies some of the details of Ghana's "final weakness": "The king's interpreters, the official in charge of his territory, and the majority of his ministers, are Muslims."³⁶

Having Muslim officials would not in itself be a sign of weakness, but in a situation where contending Lemtuna and Ghana forces watched for a sign of weakness from the other as a signal to attack, and especially in a situation wherein Islam provided an excuse for an offensive, the pagan state of Ghana was being undermined by the use of these officials, who did not give allegiance to the "religion of the king" (Al-Bakri's phrase). The description by Al-Bakri was written about ten years before the Almoravid conquest of Ghana and the divided loyalties of the king's ministers were apparently not visible to him, for he writes that:

This Tankamanin [probably the last king of Ghana before the Almoravid conquest] is powerful, rules an enormous kingdom, and possesses great authority.

When the king of Ghana calls up his army, he can put . . . 200,000 men into the field, 40,000 of whom are bowmen. The horses of Ghana are very small.³⁷

The mention of horses in this context indicates that Ghana's army was organized around its cavalry.

According to the *Tarikh al Fettach*, written long afterward by a Sudanese in the seventeenth century, Tankamanin's capital town was known as Kumbi. This Kumbi, if it is properly identified as the present Kumbi Saleh, is in the desert, as is Awdoghost, which, as we noted, may have been an earlier capital. After the defeat by Abu-Bekr, the capital may have been moved to the banks of the Niger (or perhaps the Senegal -- either of which might be referred to as the Nile by Arab writers), for al-Idrissi (1154) places it there, stating that the king's "castle" was built in 510 (1116-1117). The king is now a Muslim, which is not surprising, but unless he has acquired a fictitious genealogy, he may be partly descended from a Berber conquerer, for his ancestry is given as deriving from Salih ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hasan ibn

35. *Ibid.*, 110.

36. W. W. Rajkowski's translation, cited by Fage, "Ancient Ghana."

37. Al-Bakri, *Description de l'Afrique Septentrionale* par El-Bekri, translated by M. DeSlane (Alger, 1913).

Ali ibn Abi Talib.³⁸ This was written during the century preceding the domination of Ghana by Susu and Mali.

Just before Sundiata rose to power, Ghana was still an important kingdom, though subordinate to Sumanguro of Susu. The epic which has come down from Balla Fasseke, recorded and translated by D. T. Niane, gives a description of thirteenth-century Ghana under the Sisse king, Sumaba.³⁹ Shortly after this, around 1235 A.D., Ghana suffered a new defeat by Mali, and, if it did not disappear, became insignificant in the politics and commerce of the Sudan.

From the time of its recovery from the Lemtuna conquest to the emergence of Sumanguro and, then, Sundiata, Ghana had continued under Muslim kings, an independent state but shorn of its old hegemony. The conversion of the Ghana kings was apparently forced by Abu-Bekr, because Al-Bakri specified, a decade previously, that the king was a pagan, and a subsequent conversion, in the midst of a war which the enemy defined in religious terms, is not very likely. When the southern Almoravid power fell apart, the rulers of Ghana would have been free, presumably, to return to their ancestral faith, which is what one would expect if the conversion was forced, and that fairly recently. Why did the dynasty remain in the ranks of Islam? There are a number of possible answers.

If the royal house had been deposed by the Almoravids, the new house, even though it probably was from the royal clan, would have found the new religion a support in the argument for its legitimacy in the face of dissatisfaction on the part of members, or supporters, of the old royal house. If the conquerors had married into the old royal house, a male offspring would be legitimate in Ghanaian eyes. As Al-Bakri noted, the succession was matrilineal, and it would be legitimate in Almoravid eyes since Islam favors patrilineal succession as was already the Lemtuna custom. A king of such descent might survive in office even after his father's people were driven out, for his legitimacy derived from his mother. A Berber paternity still would not explain the descent from the son-in-law of the prophet, but it would make the fiction more plausible. It might also go back to an Arab-Berber marriage which could add further substantiation, if not proof, to the claim.

Second, Ghana lived on commerce; her customers to the north were Muslim, and there were now many adherents to that faith in the Wagadu country, so that it might have harmed relations with these groups if the kings had rescinded their conversions. On the other

38. To fictionalize a genealogy was pretty standard practice. This one, which claims the son-in-law of the prophet is dubious but not necessarily spurious. It would be possible for a Maghribene conqueror with some Arab ancestry to have married into the royal family. Such a marriage of a patrilineal conqueror with a royal woman of a conquered matrilineal society would give their offspring legal claim by both systems of reckoning, but succession, having been so legitimized in the eyes of the local people, would probably soon have been changed to Islamic norms. The alleged genealogy would have seemed less unlikely to the people of the time (if that mattered) if a conqueror who asserted such an ancestry had in fact married into the royal family.
39. D. T. Niane, Soundjata (Paris, 1960).

hand the continued adherence to Islam must have hindered Ghana's efforts to recoup its position of hegemony among the peoples of its old empire. The opposition, which eventually became strong enough to collect tribute from Ghana itself, was the pagan power of Susu. I suggest that we consider the proposition that Susu was the focus of the conservative elements who were still attached to the old religion. These elements were never eliminated and came to power again in the same region in the Bambara kingdoms after the Moroccan defeat of Gao.

Is there a connection between the names Sisse and Susu? Neither term has a semantic referent except as an appellation, so it is impossible to say that they are cognates. Nonetheless, the probability is strong that the Susu were the intransigent pagan remnant of the old Ghana dynasty, and that the Sisse are that part of the royal family which went over to Islam.

When the Sisse were brought under submission by Susu, but allowed to retain local authority and, it would seem, treated generously, the pagan element had come to the supreme position in the western Sudan again after almost two centuries. Since the Sisse were no longer in a position to give leadership to the Muslim forces, the way was open to Mali to assume this leadership, and it is pertinent to the question of Sundiata's claim to the vacant leadership that the Sisse king calls him "cousin."⁴⁰ Sundiata's family had been Muslim for at least two generations, which would make him an adherent of good standing in the Muslim camp. There can be little doubt, although neither our written sources nor the epic of Balla Fasseke mention it, that the Muslims of the north, either of the desert or the Maghrib or both, gave aid in arms, men, or money to the forces of Sundiata which, after all, were fighting for their cause.

The success of Sundiata over Sumanguro is not necessarily that of the better military strategist, nor the emergence of Mali over Susu necessarily that of superior numbers. It is rather the better international connections of the Muslim over the pagan and the consequently better supply of military necessities.

The struggle to establish Islam in the western Sudan, which reached an intensive stage in 1076 with the conquest of Ghana, did not end until about 1235, when Sundiata defeated the last strong pagan king, Sumanguro. The pagan Susu then seem to have moved off to the southwest and are perhaps to be found in the Guinea-Sierra Leone area today.⁴¹ Although the campaign began, as we noted, with the Lemtuna

40. Niane, *Sundiata*, 68.

41. The names are variously rendered, and some would like to make a linguistic distinction which would render the present people unrelated to the old kingdom. If one raises the linguistic focus from the words to the languages, it is clear that the Susu are closely related to the Soninké (who are accepted as the people of old Ghana). The differentiation of Susu and Soninké as languages may be older than 1076, but the Susu could still have been a part of the kingdom. There can be little doubt that Sumanguru's tribe had been part of Ghana before its defeat. Whether these were the same or not, Sumanguru's people were sufficiently closely related to make them a natural refuge for the defeated dynasty -- or for that part which refused to accept Islam and domination.

carrying on a jihad in the Arab fashion, the job of Islamizing the peoples of Ghana's empire was not completed by the Berbers. It had to be brought to fruition by the Sudanese, even as the Arabs could not accomplish the Islamization of the Maghrib without the aid of the Berbers. In the later phases of the struggle in the Sudan, the trade relationships became as important as the military factor, and in this respect the conversion of the area west of the Niger bend has similarities to that of the Songhai area of the bend. The military phase of the Almoravids is more dramatic, but it is not typical of the pattern of the expansion of Islam in the Sudan.

Peaceful Conversion: A Closer Look at Gao and Bornu

Five hypotheses are suggested: (1) that Islam offered several advantages for Sudanese states in the conditions of trade then prevailing; (2) that trade was the main vehicle for the dissemination of Islam in this region from the time of its introduction to the present time; (3) that the competition of the various states in the Maghrib for the Sudan trade (the source of gold which was essential to their financial stability and therefore, perhaps, to their very existence) increased the pace at which the Islamization of the Sudan proceeded; (4) that the loss of maritime supremacy in the western Mediterranean by the Muslim states of the Maghrib diminished their trade in other directions and caused the merchants of North Africa to increase their involvement in trade to the Sudan; and (5) that the eleventh century was a "turning point" in the history of the Sudan. In the discussion of these hypotheses, a supplementary hypothesis will be put forward, namely that Gao probably obtained from Jenné the gold which it traded northward, and that this was possible because of the control of Niger navigation by a single ethnic group.

The Advantages of Islam in Commerce

Misunderstandings arise easily in commercial exchanges where each party is naturally wary lest one gain an exorbitant profit at the expense of the other. This is especially true when the traders have different cultural backgrounds, for this implies different definitions of situations, different concepts of "honesty," different standards of measurement, different patterns of courtesy and manner of proceeding, and different languages -- in short, complete disjunction between the two parties to the exchange in systems of value and perception. Naturally merchants soon learn the systems of their customers, but it is not always easy to accommodate them. Especially since there were several Sudanese systems for the Maghribene merchants to learn and, with the turnover of personnel in the course of time, there would always be some neophyte traders from the Maghrib in the south who would not be well informed, even though they would have learned as much as possible from their countrymen -- which would be possible except where competition between groups or families of northern traders made such knowledge a valued advantage. Confusion must frequently have occurred.

Islam provided a common moral basis for commerce. The Shari'a provided a common standard of acceptable practice. In addition, Islamic culture provided a standardization of weights and measures.⁴² A few Maghribene coins have been found in the Sudan, indicating that they were used perhaps more than we have realized, although barter was undoubtedly generally practiced.

The religious regulation of trade had been in effect in Ifriqiya at least since the time of the Aghlabids, and a *hisba* manual of the time is still extant.⁴³ In discussing the effectiveness of the Islamic regulation of markets, Marçais writes:

The regulation of disputed transactions in the *suks* [markets], the repression of fraud, curtailment of prices and their conformity to the legal tariff, the equivalence of weights and measures to the standards set by the chief of the state, in a word the moral supervision of commerce, are subject to the control of a civil service, the *hisba*. The functionary who is in charge of this, the *mohtasib*, whose duties, besides being very extensive, are those of a censor of morals, is an important personage, generally of juridical training and who holds an authority of a quasi-religious character.⁴⁴

We cannot say, of course, that this system was utilized in the Sudan at that time in this highly developed form, but some tendency toward it is implicit in the acceptance of Islam.

Islam may have been advantageous to Sudanese merchants in yet another way. In areas of endemic conflict there is a need for a neutral to act as go-between. He must be easily recognized so that he would not be attacked by either side by mistake. He is often a man of a religious character. Clothing, tailored in a certain style, has always been in the Sudan a means of recognizing a Moslem; it could also have been accepted as the symbol of a privileged traveler who should, by common consent and in the general interest, be free from attack and pillage. Herman Melville found that in the Marquesas a young man with elaborate tattooing was permitted to go unmolested between the valleys even in time of war.⁴⁵ Cabeza de Vaca found that traders and healers could travel from the Gulf of Mexico far into the interior, provided they displayed a calabash.⁴⁶ It can be suggested that Muslim clothing in the eleventh-century Sudan might be as effective as tattooing in nineteenth-century Typee or calabashes in the sixteenth-century Mississippi valley. But we must admit that this was not a guarantee against all cupidity since we know that guards were hired to protect caravans; yet it is likely that it was sometimes effective.

42. The Sudan used salt as currency. Weights for gold of the type later made famous by the Ashanti were in use. Cowrie shells circulated and a torque, later known on the Guinea coast as a "manilla," as well as other media of exchange were then current. I intend to devote a later essay to the problem of weights, measures, and currencies of the pre-Islamic Sudan.

43. J. A. Williams, *Islam* (New York, 1963), 113-114.

44. Marçais, *Berberie Musulman*, 81.

45. H. Melville, *Typee* (London, 1845).

46. Cabeza de Vaca, *Relacion de los Naufragios y Comentarios* (Madrid, 1906).

Trade as a Vehicle for Islam

Islam does not have, aside from the recent Ahmadiyya, any regularly constituted missionaries. Every Muslim, like every Jehovah's Witness, is supposed to be a prosyletizer for his faith. A common sight in the non-Muslim forest areas of the Guinea coast lands is the Muslim who is a trader by day but who in the evening gathers around him any who will listen to his explanations and exhortations in behalf of his faith. There is little doubt that as long as Muslim merchants have been doing business south of the Sahara, they have also been explaining and exhorting. Sometimes, however, there are social conditions which favor the efforts of the prosyletizer and sometimes there are social conditions which inhibit the listeners from yielding to arguments and pleas.

We have it reported, for example, that an early nineteenth-century Ashanti in Kumasi, who had been converted to Christianity by a Fanti trader, was ordered by the Asantehene to renounce his new religion, under pain of death if he did not comply. Such a conversion impugned the divinity of a sacral king and amounted to lèse majesté. Where the state religion supported a sacral king, conversion would always be politically dangerous, except in cases where the king might permit, or even delegate, an official to assume such a guise in order better to deal with outsiders. Merchants who were subjects of the king might also receive such permission, but in either case the king, mindful of his pagan subjects, would not expect, or permit, zeal for the intrusive religion. Once a prosyletizing religion establishes a power base in the region, the possibilities increase and the king may have difficulty in controlling some of his subjects who have connections with outsiders.

Religious conversion is both an individual and a social phenomenon. We could not, if we wished, examine the aspects of individual conversion in the eleventh century -- the data for such a study have long been lost, and even for the social aspects they are uncomfortably scanty. Yet we can say that when there is a pattern of behavior in a society or a period of history, the existence of the pattern indicates that there are social factors as well as the idiosyncracies of the individuals to be considered. Paul Radin, an anthropologist who studied religious behavior among New World autochthonous peoples, pointed out that there are in all societies individuals with a mystical and/or religious bent and there are others who are essentially secular and worldly. Some converts to Islam in the eleventh-century Sudan were probably as devout as St. Francis and others were probably as pragmatic and insouciant as Henry of Navarre, who considered Paris worth a mass.

The appeal of Islam to the secular, pragmatic type of individual, of whom there were surely a good number in states with a long-distance trade, should be clear from the preceding discussion of hisba. It is suggested by the nature of the pattern -- rulers and merchants only -- that many of the conversions were pragmatic.

The Competition of Maghrib States for Sudan Trade

For a time too short to be historically important the Fatimids controlled all of the Maghrib. While the contest for control of this area may have been more tribal (Sanhaja vs. Zanata) than religious

(Shi'ism vs. Kharijism), the accomplishment of unification had the effect of giving to one state all the northern termini of the trans-Saharan trade routes.

The revolt of Abu-Yazid (944-947) and the diversion of forces to the conquest of Egypt weakened the Fatimids. Charles-André Julien says, "On the eve of the insurrection of Abu-Yazid, one could say that the Fatimids had a toe-hold in Morocco but not that their situation there was assured."⁴⁷ After the revolt the Fatimids were not able to reassert their control in the west. Julien continues, "The Spanish [Umayyads] had profited from the revolt of Abu-Yazid and eliminated from the whole of the western Maghrib the political influence of the Fatimids."⁴⁸

And from that time on the situation can be described in the words of Georges Marçais: "The North African wars were the narrow fields where the Caliphate of Cordova and the Caliphate of Cairo confronted each other, through deputized personnel."⁴⁹

The control of the Maghrib al-Aksa (or the western part of North Africa) was important in terms of the revenues of the gold trade. The western route, from the bend of the Niger to southern Morocco, was the most developed at that time, with the loss of Sijilmasa, and the failure of the Fatimids to maintain control over the northern terminus of this route had, I maintain, great consequences for the subsequent history of the Maghrib and the Sudan. If Fatimid unity of the Maghrib had not been disrupted, there would have been less warfare north of the Sahara but, probably, slower economic and social development south of the desert. Since the major portion of the gold trade was going to Sijilmasa, which now articulated with Cordova and its allies, the Caliphate of Cairo had to be concerned with the development of an alternate route for access to the Sudanese source of the gold supply. We will see below that this is precisely what seems to have happened. Therefore, we may say that if the Maghrib had remained united, the Fatimid state might have been content with a single developed trade route, but with the Maghrib divided into two spheres of influence, there was need for two routes and the development of the more easterly central route aided the growth of the central Sudan and strengthened the kingdom which controlled the trade. Later, when the Cairen sphere of influence in the eastern and central Maghrib collapsed and there was a fragmentation of political power, there was a push to develop an even larger number of trading partners to the south.

We are not concerned here with the total trade but only with gold, for the other African products might have been replaced by products of the Asian tropics; but that region could not substitute for Africa in the supply of gold.⁵⁰

47. C.-A. Julien, Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord (Paris, 1956), II, 60.

48. Ibid., 65.

49. Marçais, Berberie Musulman, 132.

50. See below.

The Importance of the Sudan Trade to the Maghrib States

It must be emphasized that until the New World mines were opened to intercontinental commerce, the Sudan was the principal source of gold, not only for North Africa but via North Africa for most of the rest of the Old World as well.

This fact is scarcely noticeable in Islamic historiography, which focused on dynastic and tribal fortunes and religious movements. It is not surprising that there was not then an equivalent of economic history, for this is a very recent scholarly development. A recent economic historian wrote, "Before the sixteenth century, it [the Sudan] had been the only source [of gold]."⁵¹

Another modern economic historian puts the case more strongly.

This gold enlivened the Mediterranean economy: a veritable flow of gold was established which washed not only the Mediterranean but the whole of Europe and the Orient. Gold played here a creative role: "It was a particle of economic force . . . initiator of large commerce, which was thus acquired by these countries: awakening Northern Europe, renewing the Occident, developing Byzance, vitalizing commerce in the Indian Ocean and central Asia."⁵²

Behind all the strife of religious, dynastic, and tribal groups with all their particularistic theological and genealogical arguments, so well set down in the contemporary literature, there was constantly the motivation to gain or to keep the control of the gold supply.

When the Fatimids lost control of the western route at the end of the tenth century, Ifrikiya, which since the time of Oqba had been the center of legitimist power in the Maghrib, was cut off from the main supply line. Therefore, the rulers of Ifrikiya, whether Fatimid or Zirid, would encourage the redevelopment of the central route, which in the long past days of Carthage had been the principal route but had been long superseded by the western route. When the Zirids broke from Fatimid control, they probably succeeded in maintaining the connection with Gao. Therefore, Cairo was probably responsible, via Kufra -- i.e., south of Zirid-controlled territory -- for the stimulation of interest in Islam and its attendant international relationships in Kanem-Bornu. Cairo, Kufra, Fezzan, Bornu would have been the Fatimid route and the Zirid route was Manzuriya in Ifrikiya to Wargla, Twat, Gao, while the Spanish Umayyads depended on the route from Sijilmasa to Taghaza, Taodeni, and then to Ghana. But all of this was temporary for power in the eleventh century was everywhere unstable. The western route was soon in the hands of the Almoravids. The Zirids collapsed and the Fatimids declined but remained an important factor in the Saharan trade. One can gauge the success of the Maghrib states in competition for the Sudan trade by the dates at which gold coinage appears and disappears.

51. M. Lombard, "L'or du Soudan dans l'histoire," Annales (1935), 117.

52. G. Lassere, "L'Or du Soudan," Les Cahiers d'Outre-Mer, no. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1948), 373.

Revenues were necessary, not only for the routine activities of states, but in time of constant strife to pay armies. The duties on the gold trade were one of the most important sources of income for the North African states.⁵³

The Redirection of Maghrib Trade from the Sea to the Desert

The Muslim powers lost control of the western Mediterranean to the Christian maritime states in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.⁵⁴ In previous centuries the possession of this control had determined the political character not only of the Maghrib and Muslim Iberia, but also of Carolinian Europe. This is the famous thesis of Henri Pirenne: without Mohammad there would have been no Charlemagne.⁵⁵ If the Muslim control of the western Mediterranean had such widespread consequences, their loss of control must also have had some effects.⁵⁶

In face of the lack of any documentation, one cannot demonstrate that Maghribine merchants, shut out of the sea-trade, turned to the south, but we have this suggestive juxtaposition: the whole of Dar-al-Islam was foundering in dire turmoil and the Sudan, unaffected by three centuries of commercial contacts with Islam, suddenly -- without invasion from north of the Sahara -- undergoes conversion in at least half a dozen states. It suggests to me a reorganization of the energies of the Maghribine peoples -- and the only portion of this population known in the south was the merchant class.

The Eleventh Century as "Turning Point" in History

Without having the Sudan in mind, it has been claimed that the eleventh century was a "turning point" of history.

If there are, as it is said, "turning points of history," epochs when, by entry on the scene of new protagonists, by entry into play of new factors, the conditions of life of the States and of the peoples seem profoundly modified, the eleventh century was one of these turning points for the world

53. Ibn Hawkal gives the revenues of the Fatimid treasury from Sijil-massa for a certain year in the late tenth century. He elsewhere gives the total revenues of the State, but it is for a different year. One of the editors of the new French translation of Leo Africanus probably had this in mind when, in a footnote, it is asserted that the gold trade accounted for half of the Fatimid income. It is not that simple and I have in preparation a paper which discusses the problem.
54. A. Lewis, Naval Power and Trade in the Mediterranean, A.D. 500 to 1100 (Princeton, 1951), 183 ff.
55. Pirenne, Mohammad, *passim*. Brønsted, The Vikings, Ch. 1.
56. This must not be pushed too far, but that the closing of one area of activity to the energies of the Maghrib would make another area more inviting is not illogical -- and we have the coincidence in time of the loss of Mediterranean maritime power and Sudanic conversions to suggest that this was indeed so.

of Islam. The events which it witnessed affected the East as well as the West, from Persia to Spain; and the Christian world, which had had a determining part in these upsettings, would, after some delay, feel it in its turn.⁵⁷

There is no doubt that the western and central Sudan should have been included in this general statement. That it was not is perhaps symptomatic of the neglect by area specialists of neighboring areas unless there are handy summaries of relevant materials available to them.⁵⁸

The Empire of Gao

The earliest of the dates that has come down to us for the conversion of a ruler in the Sudan is that of 1009, when Za Kossoi adopted Islam.⁵⁹ Kossoi was the fifteenth ruler of his dynasty. The state, before the reign of Za Kossoi, was apparently known as Kaokao (the old capital) and thereafter as Gao (the new capital). It was an old establishment, supposed to go back to the seventh century. This state, for the rest of its history, was involved in the trans-Saharan trade, and it is probable that it had already been so involved for some time. It seems a reasonable suggestion that the conversion of Za Kossoi, in which he did not carry all of his people, was motivated largely by the desire to improve relations with his trading partners to the north. The Touareg of Tadmekka, on the trade route, were already Islamized at that time, and, of course, so were the people of the Central Maghrib.

Za Kossoi received an honorific title and "a seal, a Koran and a sword, sent in effect, it is claimed by the Amir of the Believers."⁶⁰ Two rulers used this title at the time: the Fatimid Caliph in Cairo and the Umayyid Caliph in Cordova. Since Al-Bakri is the author of the work in question, we can assume that he used this title only in regard to the Cordova ruler; certainly he would not have used it for his master's rival.

The phrasing of Al-Bakri's words suggests that he is skeptical that the gifts came from Cordova. We should be too, for he had means of checking in his own city, where he was master of the royal archives, but we need not follow him in inferring, as he seems to, that the story is unfounded. The gifts may have been sent by the Fatimid ruler, or by his Zirid deputy in Ifrikiya in his name, and in any case the mission would have come through this intermediary.

If the title refers to the Fatimid ruler, the reported time of the incident is consistent with plausibility, for it was not until 1016, or six years later, that the Zirids first broke with the Fatimids and 1048 when the secession was finalized by offering the Friday

57. Marçais, Berberie Musulman, 7.

58. But the general summaries of the history of the Sudan have not, in any case, made this point. See note 6.

59. See note 5.

60. Al-Bakri, Description de l'Afrique, 183. Trimmingham, History of Islam, 88, translates "ring" rather than "seal," and in note 1 considers Spain the source of these gifts.

prayers in the name of the ruler of Bagdad. (If the Zirids had sent the mission in their own name they would not have claimed such an exalted title; therefore it can be accepted as most likely that the gifts came from Cairo, therefore before 1016.)

After the break between Ifrikiya and Cairo, direct contact between Cairo and Gao would be more difficult, if not impossible, and the Zirids probably inherited the advantage of the southern connection. Badis, one of the Zirid rulers, is said to have had two giraffes which presumably came to him from the Sudan and it is thought that they were gifts of "les chefs africains."⁶¹

The Fatimids and the Zirids had good reason to encourage Za Kossoi to increase his competition with Ghana in the gold trade, but the ability of Za Kossoi to deliver the gold still needs to be demonstrated. The main gold supply region of the period, so far as we know, was the Bambuk region, access to which from the north was controlled by Ghana in 1009 and somewhat later by Susu and then by Mali. Where did the Gao merchants get their gold?

This question cannot be answered with certainty, but we can posit a tentative answer which seems plausible. The gold came to Gao along the Niger in pirogues from Jenné, whence access to Bambuk could be gained by going west, but to the south of Ghana's and Mali's territory. Or, perhaps, Bouré came into production at that time, which would have been more accessible to Jenné. Jenné was founded by Soninke, i.e., by people of the same ethnic group to which the people of Ghana belonged. According to As-Sa'di, Jenné was founded in the second century of the hegira by pagans. Thus, at the time that Za Kossoi moved his capital from Kaokao to Gao, Jenné was in its second century of existence. We do not know the circumstances under which Jenné was founded. If it was founded between 822 and 921 A.D., during which time Tiloutan and Temim reigned, the Berber inroads on Ghana may have induced the latter to displace the locus of their activities or to start a new venture; the trade of Jenné would then articulate with Ghana, along the river to the bend of the Niger (then controlled by their relatives, the Bozo), and thence overland. After 1076 the influence of Ghana on Jenné must have been ineffectual, no matter what it was before.

On the other hand, Jenné may have been founded by a dissident, or even unrelated, group of Soninké and never come under Ghana's control. At any rate, after the Sorko (Songhai rivermen) replaced the Bozo, the orientation could easily have been changed.

There is also the claim that Jenné was founded in 1250, which, if true, eliminates the above possibilities. The historian, As-Sa'di, was cadi in Jenné and his date for the founding of the city should be given some weight, so we here discount the later date.

Jenné may, or may not, have paid tribute of some sort to Mali, but it apparently was never militarily or politically subject to any other state until the time of Sonni Ali. This claim of independence for Jenné is interesting. The preservation of independence, attributed to natural protection in the marshes, cannot be wholly explained by geographical factors.

61. Marçais, Berberie Musulman, 184.

How did the merchants of the city move their goods during the time the country was controlled by a hostile Mali? The answer to this is undoubtedly in the domination of the Niger by the Sorko, the boatmen of the Songhai. It is significant in this context that the expansion of the Sorko in the upper regions of the Niger, replacing the Bozo, is attributed to the period of Za Kossoi's reign, and, likewise, the moving of the capital to Gao would put it closer to the up-river source of gold (if it came from Jenné). It may also be significant that, while most of the rulers of Jenné have Mande names, as would be expected, one of them has a Songhai name.⁶²

It is suggested here that Jenné may have played in relation to Gao the same role that it later played to its neighboring city, Timbuctu. Let us recall As-Sa'di's statement: "Without Jenné this blessed city [Timbuctu] would be nothing." An alliance of some sort between the Soninke of Jenné and the Songhai of Gao seems certain, at least after the fall of Ghana in 1076, but we can expect that it preceded Ghana's defeat by about two generations. This alliance is no doubt one reason for Jenné's inability to hold out against Sonni Ali, when Gao began its military expansion much later, in the fifteenth century, because it was then shorn of Sorko support.

Kanem-Bornu

The kingdom of Kanem in the eleventh century was of comparable antiquity to that of the Songhai and possibly as great or maybe even greater than that of Ghana.⁶³ It was the dominant power in a large basin centering on Lake Chad.⁶⁴

Conversion took place in the reign of Hume or Umme Jilmi. This king flourished, according to all authorities, around 1086-1097 A.D.⁶⁵ According to a mahram⁶⁶ published by Sir Richard Palmer, we read (after the formal opening):

The first country in the Sudan which Islam entered was the land of Bornu. It came through Muhammad ibn Mâni who lived in Bornu for five years in the time of King Bulu, six years in the time of King Arki, four years in the time of King Kadai Hawami, fourteen years in the time of King Umme.

62. Jean Boulnois and Boubou Hama, L'Empire de Gao (Paris, 1954), 47.
63. The early history is scarcely attested in extant documents and can be approached for the most part only indirectly. These problems are seldom given any serious attention and most scholars have preferred to begin with the arrival of Islam.
64. See Y. Urvay, Histoire de l'Empire du Bornu (Paris, 1949), Introduction.
65. R. Cohen, "The Bornu King Lists," Boston University Papers on African History, II (Boston, 1966).
66. A mahram was a letter of privilege granted by a king to a subject for outstanding service. See Palmer, Bornu Sahara and Sudan, 12; Trimmingham, History of Islam, 110; Cohen, "King Lists," 47. This is mahram A, pp. 14-15 in Palmer. See D. F. McCall, "Exegesis of a Mahram," Boston University Papers in African History, IV (Boston, 1969), 1-19.

Then he summoned Bornu to Islam by the grace of King Umme.

Islam was spreading for two years before, through Mohammad ibn Mâni, it became general.

This document has a number of difficulties. One is that it must have been copied many times since the original version was composed, supposedly in the late eleventh century, and obviously later materials have at some points been incorporated. How much modification of the oldest parts has occurred is hard to say. The mahram has Muhammad ibn Mâni living in Bornu⁶⁷ during the reign of Hume for two years longer than most authorities concede that he ruled.⁶⁸ Whatever the explanation of this discrepancy, it suggests that Ibn Mâni lived in the kingdom during the entire reign of Hume and that he had been in the country for some time previously. By this account, he came first in the reign of Bulu who is generally taken as the eighth ruler (or at least the eighth name on the king list -- some earlier names may have been lost) and stayed on in the reign of Arki who was the succeeding king. Then, if King Kadai Hawami in this mahram is the same as Huwa or Houa in other sources, he was also resident in Bornu in the following reign. The next name in all versions of the king list is Soolooma and he is not mentioned in the mahram. However, he only ruled for four years and in later times he might be overlooked, but during the reign of Hume, his successor, when the mahram was presumably written, he would surely not have been forgotten. So, one might wonder if Ibn Mâni was absent from the area during this reign -- but Nachtigale and Landeroin give this ruler the name Abdallah and others give him the supplementary name Abd el Jilil which suggests that he had been personally very favorably disposed to Islam but had not made it the official religion. This might be the meaning of the phrase, "Islam was spreading for two years before . . ."

In a subsequent paragraph, where it is stated that each of the kings since the arrival of Ibn Mâni prior to Hume had studied with the religious teacher, we find the proof that he was not absent in the time of Soolooma, for we find the name Abd el Jalil with the rest in the proper order from Bulu to Hume.

We also find the statement that Hume "read secretly," but this would not seem to have been necessary in the time of Soolooma, who had been so far affected as to take an Arabic name. So we may surmise that Hume began his studies in an earlier reign. The whole account suggests a considerable number of years of preparation before the official conversion was brought about.

At any rate Ibn Mâni could not have lived continuously in the country since the time of King Bulu, because the number of years of his residence, as given, do not accord with the number of years of the reigns of the mentioned kings. Bulu reigned for sixteen years and probably it was in the later part of his reign that the proselytizer arrived. Arki ruled for from forty-two to forty-four years -- of which Ibn Mâni was there only six. It may be, if this was the first

67. Palmer, Bornu Sahara and Sudan, 12.

68. The mahram gives fourteen years and the later scholars usually calculate twelve.

six years of the reign and continuous with his residence in the previous reign, that the reason for his leaving was that the king was resistant to, or had even become hostile to, the idea of conversion, although Arki -- like Bulu before him -- read some of the scripture with Ibn Māni and was even more generous in his gifts of camels to the teacher.⁶⁹

Muhammad ibn Māni may have begun his ministry in the Sudan about 1030 A.D., if we accept the dates which Urvoy gives for Bulu (1019-1035), which seems more plausible in this context than Landeroin's dates (1002-1018) or those Palmer and Nachtigale give, which put him back in the mid-tenth century. Assuming that he was at least twenty when he arrived, he would have been about eighty when Hume died, yet even greater longevity is claimed for him. He is alleged to have "lived one hundred and twenty years." Yet, just prior to this it is implied that he lived through the reigns of six kings subsequent to Hume and the lengths of these reigns totals one hundred and seventy-eight years.⁷⁰ But actually the wording is that Islam was established and so we can view this part as a later interpolation before the paragraph, "These were years of Islam, and Mohammad ibn Māni lived one hundred and twenty years." The teacher of Hume probably died not long after the reign of the convert who gave him the mahram.

According to the above calculation of the life of Ibn Māni we have a man of admirable longevity, but not a mythological character of incredible age. He may have returned to his home country several times for business, personal, or other reasons -- or he may even have been forced to leave as a troublesome innovator -- but in any case he was absent for the greater part of Arki's reign (1035-1077 apud Urvoy). From the distance of Al-Bakri's perspective the efforts of his earlier proselytizing was not visible and Kanem was described as a "race of idolatrous Negroes." Ibn Māni would return in the next reign to resume his work and make Al-Bakri's description inapplicable, even if it was much too late to merit the claim: "The first country in the Sudan which Islam entered was the land of Bornu."

Where did Ibn Māni come from? If the name in the mahram can be equated to the Hadi al Uthmani given by Makrizi as the man who brought this state into the Muslim world, it suggests Umayyad (Eastern, not Spanish) origin, for the latter is said to have claimed descent from the caliph Uthman. Al-Bakri also had heard of Umayyad refugees from Abbasid persecution in Kanem, but Trimingham⁷¹ suggested that this is a "legend" which "may derive from the name of the first Muslim ruler, Umē, or Humē." Yet this explanation could only be acceptable if Hume had ruled in, or before, Al-Bakri's time; but all authorities (except presumably Trimingham) have placed him later.

Uthman was murdered in 655, but his kinsman, Mu'awiya, after some struggle established the caliphate as hereditary in the House of Umayya, and this dynasty ruled in Damascus until 747, when "the Abbassids openly raised the standard of revolt."⁷²

69. However, the gifts are listed in an ascending order of generosity and this leads one to suspect that it is a conventionalized account.

70. Palmer, Bornu Sahara and Sudan, 14.

71. Trimingham, History of Islam, 114, n.1.

72. G. E. Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East (New York, 1961), 27.

At the time we have calculated for the arrival of Ibn Mâni in Bulu's kingdom, the Umayyads had been refugees from Damascus for nearly three centuries (and if he was a descendant of Uthman, but not of Mu'awiya, his family may have departed even earlier). Had the family been settled in Kanem all this time -- a minimum of six generations and probably closer to nine -- and still maintained its identity? Unless an extended family -- or several collateral lines -- and some retainers were there together, marriages would have to be with pagan women, and that introduces the likelihood of dilution of the Islamic commitment and the temptation to become involved in the politics of one's maternal relatives -- which would have been the politics of a pagan state with a divine king. While it is possible that devout observance could have been maintained by strong paternal instruction of the children, especially if there were commercial contacts with Muslim merchants to reinforce such teaching, the conditions in general would be more likely to bring about the acculturation of the refugees to the religious norm of the community.

Ibn Mâni, however, was not born in Kanem. He lived there five years in the time of King Bulu and he taught the king. There is nothing to indicate that this is hagiographically supposed to convey the idea of a prodigy child, so we must assume that Ibn Mâni came as an adult from somewhere outside the kingdom. So, perhaps he was not of the Umayyad refugee group -- or perhaps they were not actually in Kanem but to the north in the Fezzan where, as middlemen, they controlled the trade of the Kanem kingdom.

Since 969 A.D. an Umayyad (not of the Spanish branch) would have been free of persecution in Fatimid Egypt. Especially if the descent was direct from Uthman, and not through the Damascene caliphs, the Shi'a rulers of Egypt would have no cause to view such a person as contaminated with guilt of the persecution of the Alids.

No matter whether born in the Fezzan or elsewhere, whether of illustrious (but sometimes dangerous) descent or not, Ibn Mâni would have found Egypt open to him and there he had access to the greatest commercial emporium in northeastern Africa. (We are not certain that he was a merchant, but we do know that he had a great number of camels. What was the use of so many, if not for caravans?)

If we take 1030-1031 as the probable time of the beginning of Ibn Mâni's mission, the Zirids of Ifrikiya had become defiant but not yet finally broken relations with the Fatimid court in Cairo. As a countermove to Zirid interception of the revenue and goods of the trade with Gao, we might postulate that the mission of Ibn Mâni was encouraged by Cairo. By the time that Hume obtained power (and I am inclined to view the reign as Islamic from the outset) in 1085, the Zirids had disappeared from power and the Banu Hilal had already swept over their land "like an army of locust, they destroyed all in the passage," in the words of Ibn Khaldun. "Ifrikiya was reduced to anarchie."⁷³

Of the fifty years dedicated to the conversion of the princes of Kanem, nearly three decades were after the fall from power of the Zirids, so that, if control by Ifrikiya of the Gao trade was the reason for beginning the mission, personal devotion must have been the

73. Julien, Histoire, II, 72.

reason for continuing it. Certainly Gao would again become accessible to Egyptian merchants, despite Maghribene "anarchie," once the Ifrikiyan interference was removed. Egypt in the lifetime of Ibn Māni saw a contest for power between the Turkish and Negro elements in the army. Abu Tamim Ma'add (1035-1094), who reigned with the title al-Mustansir, was only seven years of age at the time of his succession. His mother, a Negro, had the power in her hands during his minority, and she promoted the interests of her kinsmen. Negroes had become numerous in the time of his grandfather, Abu Ali al-Mansur (996-1021), who reigned under the title of al-Hakim bi'amr Allah, when there was friction between the Turkish element in the army and the Maghribene troops on whom the strength of the Fatimids had till then rested. He brought Negroes into the army as a counterpoise to the contending ethnic segments. The result was that the Turks and Negroes in Mustansir's reign struggled for supremacy and Egypt was so rent that the country almost fell to the Abbasids. At times Egypt was but little better than the Maghrib for security, but the dynasty survived the troubles. The "golden age" was past, "yet Egypt in the time of al-Mustansir was still the leading country of Islam."⁷⁴

It would be interesting to know what, if any, contacts, affiliations, or loyalties with states in the Sudan the influential Negroes in Egypt had at that time. Islamic states in the Sudan might bolster the position of Negroes in the power structure of Egypt, but whether they sought to further Islamization, or even if they had means to do so, is uncertain.

We must look now, finally, at Kanem's ability to deliver gold. There is not enough locally to support extensive trade. "Gold is very widespread in West Africa."⁷⁵ But "Dahomey (Perma) and Togo, while having auriferous indications, are rather poor in this metal, the same as Nigeria. The gold of these countries is of recent exploitation."⁷⁶

There was a route to Gao⁷⁷ and the Kanemi may have obtained gold there, but this would have been expensive to buy from middlemen. Is it possible that Kanem could at this time have been the exploiter of the Lobi mines? The ruins in this area are a mystery, but usually associated with Mande activities -- nonetheless, the line from Kanem to Lobi is more or less the same as that taken later by Hausa merchants to northern Gold Coast.

It may be that earlier Kanem had relied entirely on alluvial gold dust that could be washed out of the silt of local streams, but it seems logical that the growth of the kingdom and the increase of trade after the conversion depended in part on access to one of the important areas of gold-bearing geological formations. Knowledge of their existence, if not previously possessed by the Kanemi, would now be available to them from the Fatimid merchants. Wherever they obtained the metal, they got it in sufficient quantity to gild their court and officials.⁷⁸

74. P. K. Hitti, History of the Arabs (8th ed., New York, 1964), 625.

75. R. Mauny, Tableau Géographique de l'Ouest Africain au Moyen Age (Dakar, 1961), 293.

76. Ibid., 299.

77. Ibn Hawkal, cited by Trimingham, History of Islam, 111.

78. Leo Africanus, cited by Mauny, Tableau Géographique, 306.

Conclusion

The hypotheses put forward at the outset are not demonstrated as fact, but they appear to be tenable and to merit further consideration. It is rewarding to consider a particular process (conversion) in a particular time (the eleventh century) and place (western and central Sudan), because this raises more questions than a kaleidoscopic passage over the entire history. The questions must come first; the answer naturally take somewhat longer. At this point the work is obviously not completed, but at least there is some progress on the first part.

In the course of dealing with this problem I began to realize that the literature which I consulted was either by Arabists who ignored Africa or by Africanists who generally were not Arabists, and, when they were, still treated the Sudan in isolation from the Maghrib, Egypt, and the rest of Islam. The understanding of Islam in the Sudan cannot be complete, it should be obvious, without exploring the relationships with the thought and movements of Dar-al-Islam.

The studies of Islam tend to be theological or social, but seldom economic, while studies of trade are often concerned only with economic factors. There are conceptual difficulties in bringing the two together, but can anyone doubt that they are related?

With the problems of bringing material from so many categories together, some limitation of results must be expected. All that is claimed here is that it is worthwhile to try to relate things from different academic pigeonholes when they are found together in society. Hopefully, by this process, we will ultimately replace some hypotheses with proof, and then we can more narrowly assess the remaining hypotheses.

Addendum

Since this paper was written, Michael Brett has argued that the Saharan trade along the three major routes in the tenth century was in the hands of Ibadi merchants centered in the Djerid (southern Tunisia), but in the eleventh century Egypt and Morocco exerted a stronger pull and Ibadi primacy disappeared; by the twelfth century a network which was a "complicated pattern" had developed.⁷⁹

This idea does not offer any serious problems for the interpretation given above, for, while the merchants may have been principally from one region of Ifrikiya and members of a particular sect which should have provided some further sense of unity, yet there is nothing in this situation to eliminate commercial rivalries. Brett admits that at that time "the Djerid was a turbulent region, with much fighting between shaykhs, clans and tribes."⁸⁰ This type of commercial

79. M. Brett, "Ifriqiya as a Market for Saharan Trade from the Tenth to Twelfth Century A.D.," Journal of African History, X, 3 (1969).

80. Ibid., 357.

domination by merchants from a particular locality but with intense competition between groups would be similar to the nineteenth-century prominence of Awjila-Jalu merchants of the eastern and central Saharan trade in which different families competed.⁸¹

Nor would such Ibadi prominence in the early trade be an obstacle to political influences, and Brett refers to the Ibadi merchants expanding trade "under auspices of the Fatimids of Ifriqiya . . . in response to a sharp demand for gold to further imperial designs in the east."⁸² But the trend of his argument is to play down the gold and emphasize other items and aspects of the trade. In fact, Brett's concern seems to be more with the Ifrikiyan economy than with the Saharan trade, but his data, at least, and probably most of his interpretations are compatible, I believe, with the theses which I have presented.

81. T. Walz, "Notes on the Cairo-Pezzān Trade Routes during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," unpublished ms.

82. Brett, "Ifriqiya as a Market," 358.

CHAPTER 2

PATTERNS OF ISLAMIZATION IN WEST AFRICA*

Nehemia Levtzion

The nineteenth-century jihād movements in the northern Sudanic belt of West Africa put an end to a peaceful process of Islamization which had been going on for almost a thousand years. Not only did the jihād cover earlier patterns of Islamization, but it also changed the ideas present informants may have on the role of Islam and the extent of its influence before this religious revolution. In other words, Muslims in the jihād states may often find it difficult to relate -- with any sympathy and understanding -- the older Islamic traditions.

These traditions, however, have been retained farther to the south in areas where Muslims have been influential minorities for some centuries, but remained outside the orbit of the jihād. There -- in states like Gonja, Dagomba, or Mamprusi -- Islamic influence has by no means been static during the last three centuries; it has, however, developed on a pattern which may be detected from oral traditions, and is reflected in the present situation, which the researcher may observe. In other words, we are accorded the opportunity to look at a process as seen by the actors themselves.¹

As I worked among Muslims and chiefs in the Volta Basin, where Islam gained ground since the seventeenth century, I had a strong feeling that I was dealing with a process similar to that which had taken place farther to the north some centuries earlier. Indeed, when I turned back to the Arabic sources and oral traditions of the early Sudanic states, the evidence became more revealing, as if the texts have been tuned to a new key.

What I am about to try here is to offer a model for the process of Islamization, based on an interpretation of the evidence on Islam in the Sudanic belt from the tenth to the sixteenth century, indicating parallels with the Volta Basin, the southern savannah belt from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. A comparative study of these two areas readily suggests itself because both were exposed to intensive peaceful trading activities.

Following the Arab conquest of North Africa, the Berbers gradually accepted Islam. The Berbers carried Islam across the Sahara to hand it over to the Soninke in the sahil, the "shore" of the desert.

* This paper has been read before meetings of the African Studies Programs at Northwestern University, Indiana University, Boston University, and the University of Wisconsin. I am grateful to all participants for stimulating comments and queries.

1. N. Levtzion, Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the Pre-Colonial Period (Oxford, 1968), 192-193.

The Soninke brought Islam to the Malinke, their neighbors to the south, and Malinke-speaking traders -- the Dyula -- spread Islam as far as the fringes of the forest. This way of transmitting Islam, in relay, within wider cultural contacts between neighboring peoples, helps to explain the peaceful process of Islamization. Indeed, the Islamization of Africa became more successful because of the Africanization of Islam. Islam proved its vitality because of its rational basis, simplicity, and adaptability on the one hand, and its tradition of scholarship on the other. These two aspects account for two trends in West African Islam -- compromise and militancy.

These two trends were represented already in the eleventh century. In Gao, according to al-Bakri, the people were pagans and the king Muslim, but pre-Islamic customs persisted in the court.² In Takrur, the Muslim king forced his subjects to accept Islam; he introduced the Islamic law, propagated Islam among neighbors, and waged a holy war against the infidels.³ It is the compromising attitude -- the symbiosis of Islam and the African traditional religion -- which was typical of Islam in West Africa before the eighteenth century, whereas the militancy of Takrur was the exception, and may be explained by its position on the lower Senegal in continuous and intensive contacts with the nomads of the southwestern Sahara. (Indeed, because of that, Islam in Senegal is an exception in other aspects as well, such as the role of the brotherhoods and its contemporary political implications.)

In Ghana of the mid-eleventh century Muslims lived in a separate town or quarter -- like the zongos of modern Ghana -- under the auspices of a pagan king. This king "was praised for his love of justice and generosity towards the Muslims . . . He had a mosque near his court where Muslims prayed when they called upon him. His interpreters, the official in charge of his treasury and the majority of his ministers were Muslims."⁴ In Gao such close contact with Muslims brought about the Islamization of the king. This had not happened in Ghana by the time of al-Bakri. The king adhered to his ancestral religion, perhaps in defiance of his northern enemies, the Sanhaja Almoravids, who represented Islamic aggressiveness. Acceptance of their religion might have implied political submission. Elsewhere I have tried to explain in a similar way the resistance of the Mossi to the Islamized empire of Songhay in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁵ In both cases peaceful traders were welcomed, but Islam would be rejected if it represented an obvious danger to the political system. Ghana, however, was conquered by the Almoravids, and its resistance to Islam broke with the destruction of its military and political power. Ghana of al-Zuhri and al-Idrisi in the twelfth century was a Muslim kingdom.⁶

2. Al-Bakrī, Al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik: kitāb al-mughrib fī dhikr bilād Ifrīqiyya wa'l-Maghrib (Paris, 1911), 183, translated as Description de l'Afrique septentrionale (Paris, 1913), 342-343.
3. Ibid., 172/ tr. 324.
4. Ibid., 174-176/ tr. 327-330.
5. Levztzion, Muslims and Chiefs, 163-164.
6. Al-Zuhri, Kitāb al-Jughrāfiyya in Youssouf Kamal, Monumenta Cartographica Africae et Aegypti (Le Caire et Leyde, 1926-51), III, 802; Al-Idrisī, Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-aḥāq: sifat al-Maghrib wa-arḍ al-Sūdān wa-Miṣr wa'l-Andalūs (Leyde, 1866), 6, translated as Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne (Leyde, 1866), 7.

Not all the Muslims in Ghana before the Almoravid conquest were foreigners; many probably were Soninke.⁷ These were the traders who commuted between the sahil and the goldfields. Through their trade they became urbanized and detached from the peasants' way of life, and in dealing with the traders from the Maghrib, they were exposed to Islamic influence. In their wanderings they could find hospitality and a sense of community among fellow-Muslims in the trading centers, such as those described by al-Bakri, along the routes leading from Ghana to the goldfields.⁸

As most traders in the sahil and the savannah were Muslims, trader and Muslim became almost synonymous. Not only did traders tend to become Muslim, but there are documented cases in which traders who settled down as peasants went through a process of de-Islamization, gradually losing their Islamic characteristics.⁹

As long as Islam was confined to the trading communities, it operated in the fringes of the West African societies. There was a dispersion of Muslims rather than a spread of Islam. The latter happened when Muslims succeeded in winning over the chiefs. An early account of such a process is offered by al-Bakri.

The small chiefdom of Malal, beyond the upper Senegal, was afflicted by drought from one year to the other. All the prayers and sacrifices of the local priests were in vain. Then a Muslim promised that, if the king accepted Islam, he would pray for his relief. When the king agreed, the Muslim taught him "to recite some easy passages from the Koran, and instructed him in those religious obligations which no one can be excused of not knowing." On the following Friday, after the king had purified himself, the two set out to a nearby hill. All that night the Muslim prayed, emulated by the king. "The dawn only started to break, when Allah brought down abundant rain. The king ordered the idols broken, he expelled his sorcerers, and became Muslim together with his family and the nobility. But the common people remained pagans."¹⁰

This Muslim succeeded in winning over the king by demonstrating the omnipotence of Allah; praying to Allah having saved the kingdom where all sacrifices by local priests had failed. Islam made its earliest appeal in competition with the African traditional religions, proving its superiority as a source of blessings. The eighteenth-century Gonja Chronicle has a similar theme as a charter for the bond between Muslims and chiefs. Muḥammad al-Abyāḍ -- ancestor of the Gonja imams -- made a miracle, in the name of Allah, to bring a victory in a fierce battle. "When the king of Gonja saw this it made him wonder. This faith, he said, is better than our religion. He became devoted to Islam together with his brothers." In a later version of the Gonja oral traditions, we find the following significant statement:

7. Al-Bakrī (175, 176/ tr. 329, 330) suggests a distinction between Muslims and "followers of the king's religion" (ahl dīn al-malik), and not between white Muslims and black pagans.
8. *Ibid.*, 177/ tr. 332.
9. Y. Person, "Les ancêtres de Samori," Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, 13 (1963), 133-134, 139-140, 147-152; Levztzion, Muslims and Chiefs, 144.
10. Al-Bakrī, 178/ tr. 333-334.

"Actually, if you want to wage war, and you do not find a Mallam, then it is impossible for you to do so."¹¹

Chiefs were particularly inclined to seek the prayers of Muslims, and their highly appreciated amulets. Chiefs were under greater strains -- competition over the chieftaincy, fear of plots, wars with other chiefs, or responsibility for the welfare of the whole community -- than the common people whose way of life harmonized with the rhythm of the traditional religion. Also, chiefs, rather than commoners, came into physical contact with the Muslims; in controlling the Muslims' trading activities, in inquiring of Muslims about conditions in other countries, and in employing literate Muslims in the administration. I therefore emphasize the role of chiefs as early recipients of Islamic influence, and consequently the importance of centralized chiefdoms in the process of Islamization. Indeed, a survey of the spread of Islam in West Africa clearly shows that Islam did not spread among stateless peoples, even where geographical conditions were the same.

The king of Malal together with members of his family and the nobility accepted Islam, whereas the commoners remained pagans. As mentioned above, this was also the case for Gao at the same period. Islam thus became a divisive factor within African kingdoms and a potential source for internal crises. This may have been of considerable concern for the king of Aluken, a province of Ghana, who, according to al-Bakrī, "is said to have been a Muslim, but concealed this."¹²

Chiefs found themselves in a difficult position between an influential Muslim minority, living close to the center, monopolizing the trade, and having extensive outside relations, and the majority of the pagan subjects. The way out of this dilemma was for them to maintain a middle position between Islam and paganism; to be neither real Muslims nor complete pagans. That a negative definition is necessary indicates that it is difficult to locate the exact position of the chiefs between the two poles of Islam and paganism. From the middle position some dynasties or individual rulers sometimes advanced toward a more complete acceptance of Islam and sometimes fell back to regain closer relations with tradition. The position of a dynasty or a ruler lent the color to their kingdoms which made some appear Islamic and others pagan. The historical circumstances in which such changes may have taken place will now be illustrated by tracing the development of Islam in Mali over the centuries.

Arabic sources and oral traditions agree that chiefs among the Malinke were under Islamic influence before the time of Sundjata, founder of the empire of Mali, in the first half of the thirteenth century.¹³ Sundjata, therefore, came from a dynasty which had already accepted Islam, at least nominally. Yet, the traditional epos of Mali,

11. Levtzion, Muslims and Chiefs, 51-54.

12. Al-Bakrī, 179/ tr. 335.

13. Ibn-Khaldūn, Kitāb al-'Ibar: kitāb ta'rīkh al-duwwal al-islāmiyya bi'l-Maghrib (Algiers, 1847-1851), I, 264, translated as Histoire des Berbères et des dynasties musulmanes de l'Afrique du Nord (Paris, 1925-1956), II, 110-111. For oral traditions, see, among others, C. Monteil, "Les Empires du Mali," Bulletin du Comité d'Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques de l'A.O.F. (1929), 349-350.

in telling the story of Sundjata, contains hardly any Islamic elements. Sundjata is presented as a great hunter and magician,¹⁴ which, indeed, reveals as much about the nature of the oral traditions as about the image of Sundjata. But one may suggest that in a critical hour of history, when he had to mobilize the national resources of the Malinke in their war of liberation against the Soso, Sundjata, though nominally a Muslim, turned to the traditional religion for support -- to the particularistic spirit of the nation rather than to the universalistic appeal of Islam. He, therefore, came very close to the pagan pole.

From its center on the upper Niger, Mali expanded into the sahil to include the old Islamic centers of Walata, Dia, and later Timbuktu and Jenne. Muslim traders operated over an extensive network of trade routes across the length and width of the empire. Sudanese and North African Muslims came to live in Niani, the capital. Through its involvement in the trans-Saharan trade, Mali came closer to the outside Muslim world, especially under those kings who made the pilgrimage to Mecca and visited Cairo on their way. There were diplomatic relations between Mali and Morocco. As the small Malinke chiefdom turned into a vast multi-ethnic empire with an influential Muslim minority within and extensive Islamic relations without, its rulers changed their orientation from closer attachment to the ancestral religion toward an Islamic outlook.

During its golden age, at the time of Mansa Musa in the fourteenth century, Mali was regarded as a Muslim empire and was accepted as such in the Muslim world. A critical review of the evidence, however, will reveal the vitality of the pre-Islamic heritage, which sustained elements of the traditional religion.

In the fifteenth century, Mali lost the sahil together with Timbuktu, Jenne, and other centers where Islam was more firmly established. Mali was deprived of direct contact with the Muslim world north of the Sahara. The capital declined and was deserted by its floating population, the commercial Muslim community. Hence, those factors which had lent strength to the Islamic magnetic pole ceased to function. As more ethnic groups escaped the domination of Mali, the kingdom contracted to its original Malinke nucleus, contributing to the reassertion of traditional values. Muslim divines remained attached to the chiefs' courts and continued to render religious services to chiefs, but the chiefs had lost the Islamic zeal and appearance of their fourteenth-century predecessors and were sliding back toward the pagan pole.

Ibn Battuta's account of his visit to Mali in 1352-1353 is of great significance for any analysis of Islam in fourteenth-century Mali. He was present at the two Islamic festivals, which he described in great detail. The king was present at the public prayer, making it an official ceremony to which non-Muslims may also have been attracted. In return, all the prestige of Islam was mobilized in exhorting loyalty to the king, as revealed by the contents of the preaching. But, as the Islamic festival became a national feast, it also had to accommodate pre-Islamic ceremonies, which are among the sources of the kingship's legitimacy. Ibn Battuta described a dance

14. D. T. Niane, Sundjata ou l'épopée mandingue (Paris, 1961), passim.

of masks on the afternoon of the festival day as well as a recital of oral tradition by the griots.¹⁵ In Gonja, Dagomba, and Mamprusi, Islamic festivals also became the principal national feasts, but few Islamic elements remain there in the way these festivals are celebrated by chiefs and commoners.¹⁶

As a pious Muslim from another culture, Ibn Battuta regarded "the ridiculous recital of the poets" among the "vile practices" of the people of Mali, along with other pre-Islamic customs, such as the rule that "all women must come before the king naked without any cover," or the practice of sprinkling dust over the head as a sign of respect before the king.¹⁷ This practice was later among those condemned by 'Uthman dan Fodio.¹⁸

Individual kings, like Mansa Musa of Mali or Askia Muḥammad of Songhay, sincerely attempted to be devout Muslims; they supported the 'ulamā' and sought their advice. But even these kings were unable to relieve the monarchy of the pre-Islamic traditional basis. Askia Dāwūd (1549-1583) followed the example of his father Askia Muḥammad in his attachment to Islam; he could recite the whole Koran, and is said to have studied the Risāla, a basic work of the Maliki school.¹⁹ He was visited in his palace by one of the leading 'ulamā' of Timbuktu, who was shocked by the persistence of pre-Islamic practices and said to the Askia: "I thought you were mad when I saw you [doing all these]." "No," the Askia replied, "I am not mad myself, but I am the king of the mad."²⁰

Within the political system, Islam and traditionalism were by no means abstract concepts, but represented different social groups competing to extend their influence over the rulers. Part of the history of Songhay -- which is quite well documented in the Ta'rikhs and reflected in the oral traditions -- may be explained in terms of this tension as it was related to the competition among candidates for the kingship. Some of the Askias relied on the custodians of traditionalism and departed from the policy of alliance with the 'ulamā' which had been initiated by Askia Muḥammad.²¹

The core of my argument is that, though kings were instrumental in introducing Islam, supported the Muslims, and came themselves under Islamic influence, they did not become unqualified Muslims as long as they did not free themselves from the traditional basis of their authority. That a chief cannot be a good Muslim is implied by the Kano Chronicle. Umaru, Sarki-n-Kano in the first half of the fourteenth

15. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Tuhfat al-nuzār ff gharā'ib al-amṣār wa-'ajā'ib al-asfār; Voyages (Paris, 1922), IV, 409-414.
16. Levztzion, Muslims and Chiefs, 55, 89-90, 98, 133.
17. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, 423-424.
18. M. Hiskett, "Kitāb al-Farg: A Work on the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to 'Uthmān dan Fodio," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies [BSOAS], XXIII, 3 (1960), 563, 569.
19. Ta'rikh al-Fattāsh, pub. et trad. par O. Houdas et M. Delafosse (Paris, 1913), 94/ tr. 177-178.
20. Ibid., 114/ tr. 208-210. See also J. O. Hunwick, "Religion and State in the Songhay Empire, 1464-1591," in I. M. Lewis, ed., Islam in Tropical Africa (London, 1964), 310-311.
21. On the tension between Islam and paganism in Songhay, see J. Rouch, Contribution à l'histoire des Songhay (Dakar, 1954), 200-204.

century, was a Mallam and associated with Mallams before he became Sarki. Some time after his accession one of his Muslim friends admonished him: "O Umaru, you still like the fickle dame who has played you false." Umaru then called the people of Kano and said: "This high estate is a trap for the erring, I wash my hands of it." "Then he resigned . . . and spent the rest of his life in regret for his actions while he had been sarki."²²

During my field work in the Volta Basin, my informants -- both chiefs and Muslims -- were consistent in emphasizing the distinction between being a chief and being a Muslim. When I asked about a certain chief whether he was a Muslim, Muslim informants would laugh in embarrassment. They could not say a chief was a pagan, but neither could they accept him as a Muslim. One way of answering this perplexing question was to say that "he was praying." Indeed, chiefs -- though not Muslims -- do pray occasionally.²³

Islamic influence reached the various social groups within a kingdom in different degrees. Because of its adaptability in compromising with traditional African ways of life, Islam could appeal differentially to a wide section of the population. Commoners in the capital and near the courts of other chiefs may have been drawn into the orbit of Islam by attending official ceremonies in which Muslim prayers were said. These were indeed professed pagans, but they are to be distinguished from other pagans not incorporated in an Islamized kingdom. In Dagbani, the term chefera (from the Arabic kafir) is reserved for the stateless Konkomba and Bassari, who are completely untouched by Islam. It implies that the non-Muslim Dagomba are regarded as less pagan than the Konkomba.²⁴

Professed Muslims with little or no Islamic education regard praying as the principal manifestation of their faith. For those Muslims, who were very probably the great majority, the ritual rather than the legal aspects of Islam were of greater importance. Even the Koran was regarded as a source of blessing rather than a revelation of the divine law.²⁵ In the Volta Basin the Imam, with his ritual functions, is the leader of the Muslim community, and most Muslim communities have no Cadi to administer the Islamic law. Even in a city like Jenne, as late as the seventeenth century, according to Ta'rikh al-Sūdān, Sudanese Muslims did not refer to the Cadi but preferred to litigate before the preacher, who settled their affair by conciliation (and very likely with reference to customary law as much as to the shari'a).²⁶

Imams and Koranic teachers, Cadis and scholars were members of the 'ulama' class. But even here we must distinguish two groups:

22. H. R. Palmer, Sudanese Memoirs (Lagos, 1928), III, 108.

23. Levztzion, Muslims and Chiefs, 108-109.

24. Ibid.

25. See, for example, the story about the Koran of Larabanga (in Gonja, Ghana): M. El-Wakkad and I Wilks, eds. and trans., Qisṣat Salagha Ta'rikh Ghunja - "The Story of Salaga and the History of Gonja," Ghana Notes and Queries, 3 (1961), 12-15; Levztzion, Muslims and Chiefs, 73.

26. Al-Sa'dī, Ta'rikh al-Sūdān, pub. et trad. par O. Houdas (Paris, 1900), 18/ tr. 33.

those who lived with the chiefs, and rendered them religious services, and those who lived in the commercial towns, in autonomous Muslim communities.²⁷ Those who served the chiefs became integrated into the socio-political system of the state. Though in their personal conduct they endeavored to observe the obligations of Islam, they must have accepted the realities of compromise in presenting Islam to their chiefs in mild and diluted forms. For al-Maghīlī and 'Uthmān dan Fodio these were the vile 'ulamā',²⁸ yet for centuries they carried the burden of extending the frontiers of Islam.

In the autonomous Muslim communities in the commercial towns -- for which Timbuktu is the most illustrious example -- the 'ulamā' maintained a high standard of Islamic scholarship, had connections with other centers of learning in the Muslim world, and were concerned with the application of the Islamic law. These 'ulamā' represented normative Islam -- as taught in the books -- whereas the majority of the Muslims practiced what may be called popular Islam. Continuous communications between the remotest Muslim communities and the centers of learning prevented the widening of the gap between normative and popular Islam, but the very existence of such a gap inspired the 'ulamā' in their attempts toward reform.

Unlike the 'ulamā' in the chiefs' courts, who were dependent on the chiefs, the 'ulamā' of Timbuktu dealt with the rulers from an independent standing. They were therefore in a position to preach to the kings and admonish them without compromising.²⁹ It was this tradition of the 'ulamā' which brought about the militant jihād movements in the nineteenth century.

At the time of Askiya Muḥammad, a militant 'ālim, al-Maghīlī, tried to introduce reforms through the Songhay monarch. Yet, in spite of the best intentions of Askiya Muḥammad he failed to transform Songhay into an Islamic empire, as became evident under some of his successors. Indeed, the experience of many centuries proved that the ruling dynasties could not go all the way to become Muslims to fit the standards set by the 'ulamā', because of their residual pre-Islamic heritage. This radical break with the past could not be accomplished through evolution; an armed revolution was necessary. In other words, if chiefs cannot turn true Muslims, then the only way to make the state Islamic is for the 'ulamā' to become chiefs.

Most of the states which emerged as a result of the jihād movements were not, strictly speaking, theocracies (indeed few, if any, of the states in the wider Muslim world were theocracies). But a significant change occurred as a result of these Islamic revolutions. Islam moved from the periphery to the center of the socio-political system and became the only source of legitimacy for the state and its rulers.

27. On the 'ulamā' in the court of Mali, Ibn-Baṭṭūṭa, IV, 404; on Muslim autonomous communities, Ta'riḫ al-Fattāsh, 179-180/ tr. 314-315.
28. M. Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century," BSOAS, XXV, 3 (1962), 581.
29. On the confrontation between the Cadi Maḥmūd Aqīt of Timbuktu and Askiya Muḥammad, Ta'riḫ al-Fattāsh, 60/ tr. 116.

In terms of our model, the pagan pole was deprived of its magnetism. For the first time the commoners themselves were gradually moving toward Islam, not only because of greater coercion but also because this was the way to identify oneself with the socio-political system and its values. Those who remained pagan, irrespective of their numbers, were relegated to the lowest status and to the fringes of the society. Only by becoming Muslims could they again become recognized members of the system. The Hausa-Fulani state emirates of Northern Nigeria are the best example of such a process.

I have not as yet said anything about one of the most important institutions in West African Islam, the tarīqas or Muslim brotherhoods. The reason is that, in my opinion, the brotherhoods became significant in the eighteenth century only. Indeed, I could not trace any clear reference to brotherhoods in the seventeenth-century Ta'rīkh al-Sūdān and Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh. In other parts of the Muslim world the brotherhoods are sometimes associated with popular Islam, but, in West Africa -- apart from Senegal which is a case in itself -- the brotherhoods were associated with the better educated elite rather than with the rank and file. In the Volta Basin I had the impression that to become a Tijānī is regarded something like a second conversion into Islam of a higher level.

As the influence of the brotherhoods -- first Qadiriya and then Tijaniya -- spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the more deeply Islamized Sudanic belt, a new spirit of devotion to Islam was inspired. The brotherhoods enhanced solidarity and cohesiveness in the elite corps of Islam to bring about more militant and uncompromising attitudes. The brotherhoods therefore played an important role in stimulating the jihād movements. On the other hand, I believe that in West Africa, excluding Senegal, the brotherhoods were of little, if any, importance in the early stages of the spread of Islam; in the process of extending the frontiers of Islamic influence.

Throughout this paper it may appear as if I were posing as a censor of Islamic ethics and conduct by using such terms as "true Muslim," "unqualified Muslim," or "not complete Muslim." In fact, for the purpose of my studies I accept as Muslim every individual who regards himself as a Muslim. I could not, however, avoid making the distinction between different levels of practicing Islam, and for that purpose have tried to follow the standards set by the 'ulamā' for what I call normative Islam. My perception of the process of Islamization is of a movement of individuals and groups, departing from any form of traditional religion before its contact with Islam and following a line which ends with normative Islam. Everyone along this line may regard himself as a Muslim, and it is for Allah to judge his faith and deeds. It is impossible for us to weigh in quantitative terms what percentage of non-Islamic elements he carries with him in order to be able to place him exactly in the appropriate section on that line. But where we have enough evidence we may say that he has not yet gone through the complete process. The conviction that the process should be completed is again not mine; it was manifested by the very occurrence of the jihāds.

CHAPTER 3

THE SONGHAY EMPIRE UNDER SONNI ALI AND ASKIA MUHAMMAD: A STUDY IN COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS

Anne W. Pardo

Introduction

As the Mali Empire began to decline in the last half of the fourteenth century, various subject peoples reasserted their independence. One of those peoples was the Songhay, who had been subject to Mali domination at various times in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Songhay as a kingdom had existed since the seventh century, and even when subject to Mali, the Songhay king was allowed to remain on his throne as long as he swore loyalty to the Mali Mansa. However, in 1375, the Songhay took advantage of the weakness of Mali and reestablished their freedom. During the next two centuries, the Songhay created an empire which was comparable in many ways to that of Mali at its height. Although the core of the Mali empire remained independent, and was never under Songhay rule, most of the outlying areas were conquered by Songhay, and in addition new territories to the east were conquered. Thus the Songhay Empire was a successor to Mali in that it again brought the area of the middle Niger or central Sudan under one government. Songhay took from Mali the profitable trans-Saharan trade in gold and slaves, which provided an economic base for the empire.

The kings of Songhay, like the Mansas of Mali, were Muslim, as were many members of their court. According to Es-Sadi, the fifteenth Dia was converted to Islam, around 1010, and moved his capital from Goungia to Gao. From this time, there was contact with Muslims, both traders and marabouts; however the bulk of the populations remained attached to their traditional beliefs. Songhay freed itself from Mali central around 1375, but it was not until a century later that the great expansion of Songhay occurred. There were two chief architects of Songhay's expansion -- Sonni Ali (1464-1492) and Mohammad Ture (1493-1528). These two rulers were entirely different both in personality and methods of rule, and they received quite different treatment by the historians of the time. Sonni Ali is still a popular figure in the area today, due to oral traditions, and yet he was vilified by the local historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Es-Sadi and M. Kati. Mohammad Ture was glorified by these same historians and his reputation has been further enhanced by scholars such as Delafosse, Urvey (who skipped over Sonni Ali), and Trimingham. Es-Sadi referred to Sonni Ali as "evil, libertine, unjust, tyrannical, sanguinary; only God knows how many men he has caused to

die."¹ On the other hand, he spoke favorably of Mohammad Ture: "God has favored Askia-Mohammad's reign, he has assured him great conquests and has covered him with his magnificent protection."² The prejudicial view of Sonni Ali is being reevaluated by historians today, such as Boubou Hama, who has the following opinion of Sonni Ali: "The giant of West African history, Sonni-Ali-Ber, through his incomparable military genius, forged the Songhay Empire and with the same stroke the period of Songhay direction of the western and central Sudan after the collapse of the great Mali empire."³ Hama does not discredit Mohammad Ture, but tries to redress the balance between these two great men.⁴

An aware interpreter of his time, his era, it was Mohammad Ture who was the zealous administrator of all that Sonni Ali could save, on the basis of Islam; he was equally remarkable as the man of the Sudanese revival, of the greatness of the Songhay people now integrated into a much vaster ensemble, open to the Muslim world of the period and to the possibilities of fruitful exchanges and trade.

In this paper I will examine the character and achievements of these two rulers of Songhay and compare their accomplishments and importance.

* * * * *

Sonni Ali was descended from Ali Kolon, who, with his brother Suleiman Nar, was either a hostage of the Songhay ruler at the court of Mali during the time of Mansa Musa,⁵ or else in the service of the Mansa of Mali.⁶ The brothers left, or escaped, from Mali around 1335 and threw off the control of Mali; Ali Kolon became the ruler and took the name of Si or Sunni for his dynasty. It was possible that this dynasty was a continuation of the Dia dynasty (of Lemta Berber origin)⁷ because Ali Kolon was a son of Dia Yasi-boy. However, with Ali Kolon, the ruling house took a new name. Sonni Ali, or Ali-Ber, was the eighteenth king to rule after Ali Kolon, and he came to the throne in 1464.⁸ Es-Sadi said that Sonni Ali had come from Tekrur, but he gave no further details.⁹ Other traditions claim that his father was a Sonni,¹⁰ and that he was named Ma Dogo,¹¹ or Suleiman Dandi.¹² His mother was from Farou or Fara (attributed to various localities) and was not a Muslim.¹³ According to Rouch, Sonni Ali learned idolatry

1. Abderrahman ben Abdallah ben Imran ben Omir Es-Sadi, Tarikh es-Soudan, O. Houdas, trans. (Paris, 1964), 103.
2. Ibid., 121.
3. Boubou Hama, Histoire des Songhay (Paris, 1968), 128.
4. Ibid., 174.
5. Ibid., 143.
6. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 10.
7. E. W. Bovill, Caravans of the Old Sahara (London, 1933), 86.
8. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 6.
9. Ibid., 104.
10. J. Beraud-Villars, L'Empire de Gao (Paris, 1942), 43.
11. J. S. Trimingham, A History of Islam in West Africa (London, 1962), 93.
12. J. O. Hunwick, "Religion and State in the Songhay Empire, 1464-1591," in I. M. Lewis, ed., Islam in Tropical Africa (London, 1966), 301.
13. Beraud-Villars, Gao, 43.

and pagan customs from his mother and the magic of kings from his father.¹⁴ Hama has put forward the thesis that Sonni Ali came from Kebbi, actually from Farou near Sokoto, with an army to deliver Gao from the Tuareg, Arabs, and Berbers.¹⁵ It was possible that his mother was a slave from Farou or the daughter of a ruler of that area, and that Ali either went to her house in his youth or that she taught him her traditional beliefs. His father taught him the traditions of the kings because he would one day rule. These latter seemed to emphasize magical rather than Islamic elements. Thus Ali was exposed to three systems of belief: royal magic and superstition, local beliefs of Farou, and Islam as practiced in the court and the trading center of Gao.

When Sonni Ali came to the throne, Timbuktu had been under Tuareg rule since 1433. The Tuareg chief, Akil-ag-Meloual, did not rule Timbuktu himself but left it in the hands of Mohammad-Naddi, who had governed Timbuktu also under the Mali empire.¹⁶ In 1465 Mohammad-Naddi died and was succeeded by his son Ammar. Mohammad-Naddi had sent his congratulations to Sonni Ali upon his accession; Ammar, however, had sent him an unfriendly letter. In 1467 or 1468 Akil arrived in Timbuktu during the annual tax collection and confiscated Ammar's share of the tax in addition to taking his own. Ammar turned to Sonni Ali for assistance in ridding Timbuktu of Tuareg domination. During his first three years, Sonni Ali had been consolidating his power and was eager to add Timbuktu to his domain. Ammar had promised to deliver the city to him.¹⁷ At sight of Ali's army, Akil and many of the Muslims fled to Walata; at the last moment Ammar fled too, fearing perhaps that, because of his earlier opposition, Ali would not treat him kindly.¹⁸ Sonni Ali seemed to have been feared by the Muslims, either because of his insensitivity to the scholars was already known, or perhaps because of his pagan upbringing. He justified these fears by his harsh treatment of those who remained behind in Timbuktu. His excuse for the harsh treatment was that Muslim scholars were too friendly with the Tuareg;¹⁹ but it may also have been frustration with Ammar. El-Mokhtar, brother of Ammar, had been left behind to make submission to Ali, who accepted him as Mayor of Timbuktu, despite his persecution of this line. The possession of Timbuktu alone did not assure Ali of control over the profitable trade; in order to secure that trade, Ali turned next to Jenne. Rouch claimed that the siege of Jenne took place from 1471 to 1476;²⁰ Hama placed it from 1466 to 1473²¹ (thus before and after Timbuktu was captured); Delafosse said that the siege was four, not seven years, beginning after the capture of Timbuktu and ending by 1473.²² Ali did not persecute the people of Jenne; in fact, he married the mother of the young king (the king having died during the siege).²³ Sonni Ali thus had gained

14. Jean Rouch, Contribution à l'Histoire des Songhay (Dakar, 1953), 181.

15. Hama, Songhay, 128.

16. Ibid., 144.

17. Ibid.

18. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 105.

19. Ibid., 107.

20. Rouch, Contribution, 182.

21. Hama, Songhay, 145.

22. Maurice Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal-Niger (Paris, 1912), II, 79.

23. Ibid.

control of the centers of trade within the Sudan and of the terminus of trade with North Africa. He proceeded to extend his control over the country between these two towns.

In these exploits the Mossi were one of his enemies and he attacked them in 1469, 1470, 1477, and 1483.²⁴ He made expeditions against Hombori and Bandiagara in 1465, 1466, 1476, and 1484, and against the Fulani of the Gourma region (South of the Niger and Timbuktu) in 1465, 1470, 1488, and 1492.²⁵ Ali planned an attack on Walata by digging a canal and transporting his army by water; while he was involved with that project, however, the Mossi attacked and pillaged Walata in 1480, and Ali turned to meet and defeat the Mossi in 1483.²⁶ In 1486 he undertook new persecutions against the Muslims of Timbuktu and put El Mokhtar, the Mayor, in prison. Sonni Ali's major enemies were thus the Fulani, the Tuareg, and the Mossi, and he conducted numerous expeditions against them as there was not one center of power which he could defeat and thus end the threat once and for all. In 1492 he met his death on the return from an expedition in Gourma (see below). An account of his reign reads like a series of battles, but he was establishing his control over new areas and it was necessary to eliminate the opposition. Even those who vilified Sonni Ali testified that he was a strong man with great energy,²⁷ "always the victor, never vanquished."²⁸ Thus he must have been a talented general, able to organize men, keep their allegiance, and supply his army (especially as he was constantly on the move and away from his capital for long stretches of time). He had residences at Koukiya (Goungia, ancient capital), Gao (actual capital), Kabara (part of Timbuktu), and Owara (Aoure) in Dirma; but he spent little time in any of these places, being constantly on expeditions.²⁹

Sonni Ali drew his army from the people of his empire as needed; there was no standing army. He had several generals, among them Mohammad Ture and his brother Omar-Komdiago. His government seemed to have been administered by chiefs or governors (farma or faren or koi), who were sometimes head of an army as well, i.e., the Dendi-fari Afoumba.³⁰ The governors probably drew their army from their provinces. There was a hi koi or chief of the flotilla;³¹ Ali seemed to use the rivers for transportation, as was evident in his scheme to build a canal to Walata. Songhay was composed of twenty-four tribes of slaves or castes;³² some of the occupations of these groups illuminate practices current in Songhay. There were cutters of grass for horses;³³ thus horses were present and probably used by the army. Another group was the fishermen and boatmen;³⁴ thus, the importance of the river was indicated. Others were servants, smiths,

24. Rouch, Contribution, 182.

25. Ibid.

26. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 114.

27. Ibid., 103.

28. Mahmoud Kati, Tarikh el-Fettach, O. Houdas and M. Delafosse, trans. (Paris, 1964), 82.

29. Ibid., 85.

30. Ibid., 89.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., 106.

33. Ibid., 109.

34. Ibid., 110.

shoemakers.³⁵ There were numerous other titles listed by Kati, many of which were retained by the Askia. Thus Ali had created a vast empire by conquest, with the beginnings of a bureaucratic network; unfortunately he was still securing himself militarily and did not live long enough to complete the organization of his administration. For that reason, the credit has often been given to his successor. But he had accomplished an admirable feat in twenty-eight years. Trimingham has said that he tried to build his empire by force;³⁶ but perhaps he did not live long enough to complete the next step. When he died, his empire was divided geographically into two areas: the west centered around Timbuktu and Jenne; and the east, around Gao and the Songhay homeland. Had he lived longer, he might have been able to affect greater integration between the two. And perhaps there would have been other innovations. It was claimed that he had contact with the Portuguese and gave them permission to establish a factory at Wadan.³⁷

The Arab historians pointed to the Muslims killed by Sonni Ali, thus implying that he was an infidel, like his mother. And yet there were instances in the accounts of both Es-Sadi and Kati where he took part in Islamic rituals. What then was his religious position? As we have seen from his background, he had had contact with the traditional beliefs of a rural area, with the royal cult, and with Islam. From Rouch we gain an idea of the complex nature of Songhay religion and how Islam had infiltrated and strengthened the traditional beliefs.³⁸ Songhay had borrowed religious practices from both Islam and Mali, and probably from other sources too. Rouch believed that Sonni Ali had attempted to synthesize Islam and traditional religion.³⁹ Hunwick added that perhaps the traditional beliefs were weakening, and thus Sonni Ali took from Islam certain aspects to strengthen traditional ways.⁴⁰ But Ali's power was based on tradition; although he used Islam, he did not want it to become dominant and thus his persecution of the Muslim traders of Timbuktu was aimed at limiting their power.⁴¹ Hunwick's thesis was that Ali wanted to maintain Islam as a royal right and provide a strengthened tradition with some Islamic elements for the people.⁴² It was possible that these were Ali's intentions; let us consider some of the details.

Although there is no proof for the conclusion that traditional ways were beginning to weaken, we do know that Islam had been present since 1010 and that with the development of Timbuktu and Jenne, these towns were Muslim centers.⁴³ In fact, we might assume from Ammar's letter criticizing Sonni Ali that the Mayor of Timbuktu considered himself an important and even semi-independent person. But we also know that Islam was limited to the trading centers and trade routes and that rural areas were little affected. However, the increase of

35. *Ibid.*, 111-112.

36. Trimingham, *History*, 93.

37. Bovill, *Caravans*, 90.

38. Jean Rouch, *La Religion et la Magie Songhay* (Paris, 1960), *passim*.

39. *Ibid.*, 14.

40. Hunwick, "Religion and State," 301.

41. *Ibid.*, 302.

42. *Ibid.*

43. Ibn Battuta, *Textes et Documents Relatifs à l'Histoire de l'Afrique*, R. Mauny, V. Monteil, A. Djenidi, S. Robert, J. Devisse, trans. (Dakar, 1966), 67-70.

trading contacts, the disruption of the countryside caused by the fall of Mali and the expeditions of Sonni Ali, could have had a detrimental effect on the traditional religious beliefs. Islam was more easily introduced and accepted when society was disrupted and there was a break with the past.⁴⁴ Yet Sonni Ali certainly did not choose to use Islam alone as a new integrative force, perhaps because he did not want to be subjected to an outside force. Rouch claimed that Sonni Ali wanted to rid his territory of all foreign influence (Islam, Mali, Arab, or Tuareg), and build a purely Sudanic state.⁴⁵ Since there had been Islamic influence from 1010, it would not be possible, probably, to eliminate Islamic practices. And there were certain aspects of Islam which were useful, i.e., in the areas of trade, standardization of weights and measures, Arabic as the language of trade, or the supervision of markets.

Despite Ali's persecutions of the Muslims, therefore, the two Tarikhs mentioned his performance of Muslim rituals. Kati said that although his actions were those of an infidel, he spoke as though well versed in religious (Muslim) things. He was recorded as praying at the time of Islamic holidays, or Ramadan, while on expeditions.⁴⁷ He made the qadi, Habib, his chief qadi, because he respected the paternal cousin of this man, one El-Mamoun.⁴⁸ On another occasion he sent the Muslim scholars of Timbuktu a present of some women captives.⁴⁹ He postponed his daily prayers and then said all five at one time,⁵⁰ but he did perform them. Es-Sadi referred to him as a Kharedjite.⁵¹ Whether or not this was an excuse to disqualify his Muslim practices, an explanation of his treatment of Muslims, or simply another name used against him (because the Malikite code was predominant in the Sudan), was not clear. Beraud-Villars claimed that the Kharedjite doctrine had been propagated by Abu Yezid, whose mother was a native of Gao.⁵² It may have appealed to Sonni Ali because it rejected the Khalif in Mecca, and thus he claimed to be Kharedjite without adhering to any of the austere practices of that sect.⁵³ Levy defined the Kharedjites as a dissident group which renounced the need for higher authorities; one could follow the laws without guidance and where such guidance was necessary, a local believer could be chosen.⁵⁴ This lack of subordination to outside authority would have appealed to Sonni Ali. It was Rouch's contention that Ali was a Muslim when he began his reign and then reverted to the traditional beliefs.⁵⁵ But Hunwick has pointed out that this interpretation was based on an inaccurate translation of an Arabic manuscript of Al-Maghili; the accurate translation stated that he fasted at Ramadan, gave alms, and also worshipped idols and trusted soothsayers and magicians.⁵⁶

44. J. S. Trimingham, Islam in West Africa (London, 1959), 30.

45. Rouch, Contribution, 185.

46. Kati, Tarikh, 82.

47. Ibid., 88.

48. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 107.

49. Ibid., 109-110.

50. Ibid., 110.

51. Ibid., 115.

52. Beraud-Villars, Gao, 53.

53. Ibid.

54. Reuben Levy, The Social Structure of Islam (Cambridge, 1965), 289.

55. Rouch, Contribution, 185.

56. Hunwick, "Religion and State," 299.

Let us examine some of the traditional religious practices which Rouch observed several centuries later, which showed Islamic influences. The Songhay believed in a high god, a creator, but remote, with no associated cult; a concept which could be equated with Allah.⁵⁷ The cult of Maleka, an angel of good, was influenced by both Islam and magic.⁵⁸ The cult of Zin, based on the divinity of the soil, a belief of agricultural people, was much influenced by Islamic ideas.⁵⁹ The ancestor cult was an important part of traditional belief; Islamic influence, however, made the ancestors an intermediary in the worship of Allah⁶⁰ or substituted a venerated marabout for the ancestors.⁶¹ Sometimes a historical figure, such as Sonni Ali, was incorporated into a myth or cult, displacing the previous character.⁶² Traditional cults, such as the Holey, gods in the form of men who could act in the earth, water, or sky, were used to explain natural events, and were still accepted in Rouch's time.⁶³ The belief in magic and divination could be easily accepted within an Islamic framework.⁶⁴ Not all of these beliefs were accepted by everyone at the same time, but it does indicate the ways in which Islam can be accommodated with traditional beliefs. In fact, the Muslims were city dwellers and traders, who needed the fishermen, smiths, and cultivators, and therefore did not destroy their traditional beliefs which were related to their occupation but added Islamic elements.⁶⁵ Rouch, therefore, concluded that:

The observer in general sees only Islamic manifestations -- Ramadan fasts, feasts of the sheep, daily salams. He has often concluded that the Songhay are entirely Islamised.⁶⁶

But on closer examination,

Islam in Songhay appears less like the dominant religion than like an essential element of a religious complex (itself formed through the contact of various influences) in which it is, more or less thoroughly, melded.⁶⁷

Was Sonni Ali then attempting a synthesis of Islam and traditional belief? He was equipped by his personal background to do so, and he also needed a strong base for his expanding empire. Some synthesis would of course take place naturally, but it did appear that Sonni Ali kept up Islamic practices and yet persecuted the leaders and also participated in traditional practices. And for this contradictory situation there must have been a reason. Trimingham concluded that he was making fun of Islam with his prayers.⁶⁸ Delafosse felt

57. Rouch, Religion, 30.

58. Ibid., 31.

59. Ibid., 9-10.

60. Trimingham, Islam in West Africa, 105.

61. Rouch, Religion, 31.

62. Ibid., 12.

63. Ibid., 29.

64. Lewis, Islam, 64.

65. Rouch, Religion, 15.

66. Ibid., 7.

67. Ibid., 17.

68. Trimingham, History, 94-95.

that he was undecided as to which religion to accept.⁶⁹ But as Hunwick has mentioned, these explanations are not consistent with the other facts we know of Sonni Ali, his personality and his military exploits. On the other hand, Ali did not use Islam in the way that Mohammad Ture would do. Therefore, the possibility remains that he was pursuing a purposeful course as concluded by Hunwick. "Sunni Ali, therefore, in his apparently ambivalent attitude, was but endeavoring to maintain the equilibrium and safeguard his own position."⁷⁰

I found it instructive to consider the religious beliefs of Sonni Ali both as a means of comparison with Mohammad Ture and also as an explanation of some of Ali's political and military actions. The relationship of each to Islam was quite different, and the way each treated Islam was to have almost opposite results in the empire.

What can be said of Sonni Ali's personality? Kati described him as "tyrannical, debauched, cursed, oppressing,"⁷¹ and Es-Sadi's string of adjectives consisted of "evil, libertine, unjust, tyrannical, sanguinary."⁷² Their attitude was colored by his treatment of Muslim scholars, especially in their native city of Timbuktu. But Sonni Ali was also a good soldier and a vigorous ruler. He probably believed that force or strong action was the best way to produce results. Being a strong and determined man, he did not accept criticisms well, especially from those who did not seem to him to have had the necessary experience. He was likely an impatient man who could not take time from battles to perform prayers or other rituals. He was a man of action, a soldier; he was also a man of occasional violent temper. When he was angry with someone he might order his execution, but he would later repent, sincerely.⁷³ His servants, knowing this, would hide the condemned man until Ali repented and then produce him; one of these servants was Mohammad Ture.⁷⁴ Ali was ambitious and forthright; he was not crafty or cunning. He must have been an excellent soldier to have achieved the exploits he did. His use of the river for transportation was clever, and the idea of a canal to Walata showed a sharp intellect. That he was a great man in the eyes of the people is illustrated by Hama's writings.

There were several versions of Sonni Ali's death, and none can be completely accepted. One version was that he drowned in a River Koni on his way back from a military expedition in Gourma in 1492-1493.⁷⁵ Another was that he died suddenly in the village of Konna, struck down by God.⁷⁶ The Songhay traditions from Tera, however, asserted that Ali was assassinated by one of his generals, Mohammad Ture, who later took the throne from his son.⁷⁷ His death appeared to have been sudden, so perhaps the traditions were trying to account for that as well as for what was to follow. His son did succeed him for a short time, as Sonni Bakary Daa or Sonni Barou, so whether or not

69. Maurice Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal-Niger, II (Paris, 1912), 82-83.

70. Hunwick, "Religion and State," 303.

71. Kati, Tarikh, 81.

72. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 103.

73. Ibid., 110.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid., 116.

76. Kati, Tarikh, 99.

77. Hama, Songhay, 147-148.

Mohammad Ture assassinated Sonni Ali, he did not gain power immediately. Both Kati and Es-Sadi claimed that Mohammad Ture was motivated by religious considerations; Kati even said that he had asked Sonni Barou three times to convert to Islam, but each time he had refused.⁷⁸ Mohammad Ture's first attempt to take power in February 1493 by attacking Sonni Barou at Diaga was unsuccessful. Beraud-Villars felt that there was discontent with the choice of Barou as the successor, partly for religious reasons, and that Mohammad Ture, who had personal ambitions, organized the discontent.⁷⁹ The fact that Sonni Barou would not accept Islam was certainly the excuse if not the main reason for opposition, and in April 1493 Mohammad Ture made a second attack, at Angou, and defeated Sonni Barou, who fled to Anorou.⁸⁰

What sort of man was Mohammad Ture to have served under Sonni Ali and then have brought the Sonni dynasty to an end? The Tarikh el Fettach attributed a common origin to the Dia, Sonni, and Askia dynasties, but gave no further details.⁸¹ This would contradict the belief that Sonni Ali had a Berber origin,⁸² because it was generally agreed that Mohammad Ture was Sudanese, i.e., Soninke.⁸³ The tradition, however, indicated that Mohammad Ture was the nephew of Sonni Ali, having been the son of his sister Kassai, naming a genie as his father.⁸⁴ In order to explain his inferior rank relative to his birth, the traditions said that Sonni Ali was told by divines that he would be assassinated by a son of his sister Kassai; thus he put all her sons to death.⁸⁵ But Mohammad Ture was born on the same night as the girl baby of a slave of the compound, and Kassai and the slave exchanged babies.⁸⁶ According to Hama, the legend was a means of justifying Mohammad Ture's later position,⁸⁷ which would be a possibility.

There are several questions which should be asked here. Mohammad Ture was fifty when he took the throne, but if he was so religious and opposed to Sonni Ali's practices, why did he serve him for so long? Kati claimed that only one king, the Bara-koi (chief of Bara) allied with Mohammad Ture against the Sonni.⁸⁸ Mohammad Ture, however, as a general under Ali, would have had troops under his command. He was probably a skilled warrior, having studied under Sonni Ali. As such, he would also have had access to Ali and probably could have assassinated him, although one might expect him to have had someone else perform the actual act for him. He would then have to justify his action and position, and may have used religion as an excuse and a means. There was, however, no indication that he was particularly religious up to this time; in fact he probably aided Sonni Ali in persecuting Muslims. Beraud-Villars described him as intelligent, energetic, thoughtful, a man who knew what he wanted, but not an adventurer;⁸⁹ and yet he had served Sonni Ali until the age of fifty, an

78. Kati, Tarikh, 102.

79. Beraud-Villars, Gao, 60.

80. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 117.

81. Kati, Tarikh, 93-94.

82. Bovill, Caravans, 86.

83. Beraud-Villars, Gao, 61.

84. Hama, Songhay, 149.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid., 150.

88. Kati, Tarikh, 102.

89. Beraud-Villars, Gao, 61.

advanced age for that era. Did an opportunity suddenly present itself and Mohammad Ture was chosen by the Muslims, or chose himself, to take action? Or had Sonni Ali's evil practices increased beyond endurance? I cannot answer that conclusively.

Under Sonni Ali, Mohammad Ture had held the title of askiya, but he was not the only askiya; his actual position was Tondi-farma or chief of the cliffs and the Tondi Mountains.⁹⁰ His brother, Omar Komdiaga, also held a position under Ali, that of Kotalo-farma, or chief of Kotalo (an unidentified region).⁹¹ If the title askiya existed under Sonni Ali, then the origin recounted by Es-Sadi that it was the equivalent of "he is not that" in Soninke, and was uttered by Ali's daughters when they learned of Mohammad Ture's accession, would not be possible.⁹² Also, the blood relationships of Ali and Mohammad Ture would have given the latter access to the magical powers as well as partially justifying his succession, which did not seem to have been the case. Regardless of his origin, Mohammad did succeed and take the name of Askia for the new dynasty which he founded.

The advent of Mohammad Ture as Askia brought a change for the position of Islam in the empire. Muslims were no longer persecuted, El-Mokhtar was released from prison, and his brother Ammar, who fled in 1469 to Walata, was recalled to be governor of Timbuktu (he had died and the position was given instead to his son Omar).⁹³ The *Tarikhs* could not say enough favorable things about the Askia and his treatment of the Muslims. It was possible that Mohammad Ture owed his accession to Muslim support and was thus obligated to them. Two years after he took power, in 1495, he went on pilgrimage to Mecca. Several interesting facts emerged from this event. He must have felt his position to have been secure in order to have allowed him a two year absence. He left his brother Omar Komdiago, now governor of Gourma, in charge. He was accompanied by his son Musa and his confident Ali Folan, whom Kati said was the chief of the palace eunuchs,⁹⁴ and whom Delafosse called a general.⁹⁵ His pilgrimage was lavish, after the fashion of Mansa Musa (perhaps even consciously copying him). He took much of the wealth from the treasury which had been accumulated by Sonni Ali and distributed it as alms in the Holy Cities, thus making an impression. Oral tradition claimed that he made the pilgrimage to seek pardon for killing Sonni Ali.⁹⁶ Another reason given was his need for advice from religious authorities on the affairs in his empire.⁹⁷ The traditions of Wanzerbe held that the ulama in Mecca were divided as to whether Mohammad Ture was a Muslim or a pagan.⁹⁸ Still another reason put forward to explain his pilgrimage concerned his desire to create a new basis of authority because Sonni Barou and his brothers had escaped with the traditional insignia of office which had been the outward symbols of the traditional basis of authority.⁹⁹ The Sherif of Mecca, according to Kati, gave him the turban of sovereignty

90. Kati, *Tarikh*, 88-89.

91. *Ibid.*, 89-90.

92. Es-Sadi, *Tarikh*, 118.

93. *Ibid.*, 118.

94. Kati, *Tarikh*, 125.

95. Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, II, 86.

96. Rouç, *Contribution*, 188.

97. *Ibid.*, 193.

98. *Ibid.*, 194.

99. *Ibid.*

and the title of imam;¹⁰⁰ Es-Sadi said it was the Abbasid Khalif who named him his lieutenant in the Sudan.¹⁰¹ He therefore acquired, from his pilgrimage, new insignia of office, regardless of what it actually was. Hunwick has suggested that the story of Mohammad Ture's pilgrimage in Kati was altered by Seku Ahmadu in the early nineteenth century, with additions pointing to the advent of another savior, such as the story of the twelve Khalifs.¹⁰² Furthermore, it was likely that the Abbasid Khalif mentioned by Es-Sadi was in Cairo, not Mecca, and was the puppet of the Mameluk Sultans; he thus granted Mohammad a meaningless privilege as his lieutenant in the Sudan.¹⁰³ There was little doubt, however, that Mohammad Ture was impressed by what he had seen on his pilgrimage. The lands he had traveled through were all Muslim, and this may well have influenced him in favor of Islam. He had been treated well, perhaps partly because of the wealth he displayed (like Mansa Musa). He had met Muslim scholars, such as El-Djelal-Es-Soyouti, who advised him on matters of state.¹⁰⁴ Thus, regardless of what he had been when he set out, he came back with a belief in Islam and a desire to put it in force in his empire, and this could be seen in his subsequent actions.

Beraud-Villars characterized Askia as an organizer and consolidator, not a conqueror.¹⁰⁵ But the conquering had been done by Sonni Ali and Askia had certainly participated as his general; furthermore, he undertook additional military expeditions as we shall see. Sonni Ali had begun to organize his acquired territories, but had not been able to complete the mammoth task. Thus Mohammad Ture was not the innovator, at least in some areas, that he has sometimes been considered. Before discussing his political policies, however, it must be made clear that military actions continued, in suppressing revolts in conquered areas and in repelling Mossi raids. Although Mohammad Ture did not always head his army in person, his skill and experience as a general must have been an important factor. Furthermore, his brother, who also had experience under Sonni Ali, served as the Askia's second-in-command. Mohammad Ture came to power in May 1493, and in 1494-1495 he captured the town of Diaga, possibly with the help of his brother, whom he named Kan-fari, chief of the summit, at this time.¹⁰⁶ Askia told Omar to select a city for his headquarters and to establish himself therein; Omar selected Tendirma and proceeded to establish himself there (peacefully?) with the aid of the Sorko inhabitants.¹⁰⁷ After this, Askia left on his pilgrimage, trusting his brother to maintain the empire in his absence. Part of the army and court accompanied him on pilgrimage, perhaps eliminating some possible dissensions. On his return from Mecca, Askia was imbued with religious zeal and conducted his only jihad against the Mossi, in 1498-1499. He went through the formula of asking King Nasserere I of Yatunga to convert, and, when he refused, he tried to force him through war.¹⁰⁸ The battle was considered a victory because he defeated the Mossi army, but the Mossi were not converted as a whole

100. Kati, Tarikh, 131.

101. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 120.

102. Hunwick, "Religion and State," 327; Kati, Tarikh, 127.

103. Hunwick, "Religion and State," 328.

104. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 121.

105. Beraud-Villars, Gao, 61.

106. Kati, Tarikh, 118.

107. Ibid., 121-124.

108. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 122.

(many captives were taken and became soldiers).¹⁰⁹ In 1499-1500 Askia annexed Bagana, a former territory of the Mali empire. Having added that large area in the west, he then turned his army to the east. Delafosse claimed that he moved against Sonni Barou in Ayorou (where he had fled);¹¹⁰ but Rouch and Hama contend that it was Ayar:Air, not Ayorou, and that Delafosse had confused the two places.¹¹¹ The expedition in the Sahara accordingly lasted from 1500 to 1504 and resulted in the Berber-Tuareg-Kabyles coalition being crushed.¹¹² During this same period Omar conducted an expedition in Dialana (former Diara of Mali), which was probably a continuation of the Bagana campaign. One of the captives in the Dialana campaign was to become the mother of Askia's son Ismail.¹¹³ Kati, however, said that from 1502 to 1504 Askia remained in Gao, undertaking no expeditions;¹¹⁴ therefore he did not lead the second half of the Sahara campaign mentioned above. It was in 1502 that Al-Maghili visited Gao; I will discuss his influence on Askia later in the paper. In 1505-1506 there was an expedition in the southeast against Borgou or Bariba, in which the Niger was utilized to transport troops. (El Kassoum said the Borgou campaign lasted until 1509.)¹¹⁵ The casualties among the leaders of Eastern Songhay were high,¹¹⁶ a fact which greatly disturbed Omar. Askia, however, justified their death as they were still attached to Sonni Ali and would have become troublesome later on.¹¹⁷ This would indicate that Askia was not completely accepted.

There followed one year of rest, and then in 1507-1508 there was an expedition against another of Mali's former territories, Galambout¹¹⁸ or Kilanbunt.¹¹⁹ Askia sent two of his trusted advisors, Ali Folan and the Balama, Mohammed-Korei, to meet with the Bagama-fari in 1511-1512. But there was no indication of the reasons behind this meeting.¹²⁰ The following year Askia faced opposition in the form of the Fulani chief Tenguella who posed as a Muslim prophet and reformer, rousing followers in Bakounou (to the west of the Empire which had been captured from Mali). Delafosse said that Askia defeated Tenguella,¹²¹ Kati claimed that it was Omar,¹²² but at any rate he was killed and his followers fled to Futa where they established a Fulani dynasty which lasted until the eighteenth century.¹²³ The importance was that Askia fought against other Muslims. Having defeated this threat in the West, Askia again turned to the east, this time to Katsina to reassert an old domination.¹²⁴ The Kanta of Kebbi admired this victory and allied with Askia against Agades in 1514-1516, which was duly conquered and forced to pay tribute. However, Askia and the Kanta quarreled over the division of the booty¹²⁵ and separated; in

109. Hama, Songhay, 155.

110. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal-Niger, II, 89-90.

111. Hama, Songhay, 155-156; Rouch, Contribution, 195.

112. Hama, Songhay, 156.

113. Ibid.

114. Kati, Tarikh, 137.

115. Hama, Songhay, 157.

116. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 125.

117. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal-Niger, II, 91.

118. Kati, Tarikh, 143.

119. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 125.

120. Kati, Tarikh, 145.

121. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal-Niger, II, 91.

122. Kati, Tarikh, 145.

123. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal-Niger, II, 91.

124. Rouch, Contribution 195.

125. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 129.

1516-1517 Askia tried unsuccessfully to conquer Kebbi. This was Askia's most serious defeat and was to check his expansion in the southeast as well as diminish his reputation.¹²⁶ Bagana received a definitive defeat in 1517 at the hand of Omar;¹²⁷ this was the second or third expedition against Bagana. However, Omar died in 1519 and Askia lost his brother, second in command, and trusted adviser. Askia himself must have been seventy-seven. An older brother, Yahia, succeeded to Omar's position as Governor of Gourma. There were however no more military battles, testimony to either the importance of Omar or the advanced age of Askia, or both. About 1519 Askia became blind, although it was only known by Ali Folan, who thus became inseparable from him. It was at this time, taking advantage of his age, that his sons organized against him; however, I will not include a discussion of those events. I have dwelt at length on the military events of Askia's reign, in order to show that it was not very different from that of Sonni Ali. Both pacification and new conquests continued under Askia. He was continuing the pattern established by his predecessor.

I turn now to a consideration of the political side of Askia's reign, which as we shall see, was inseparable from the religious. From the beginning, Askia had made a conscious effort to ally with the religious leaders. He brought the scholars back from Walata; he consulted them; he used religion to justify his position; he built mosques and sponsored schools. In essence he established Islam as the state religion, not an easy chore, despite the association with Islam over the centuries, as traditionalism had been strong under Ali. In seeking advice during his pilgrimage he may have been looking for more objective guidance than that given by Timbuktu scholars which might have had some elements of revenge. He made contact with Es-Soyouti and Al Maghili in Cairo, and carried on a correspondence with the latter after his return to Gao which dealt with Islamic solutions to the problems of his realm. From the correspondence we can see that certain pre-Islamic practices continued in Songhay and were mixed with Islamic practices. For instance, Askia asked what he should do about the practices of sand-divining, astrology, and the use of talismans to bring good luck or prevent evil.¹²⁸ One area in which Islam offered benefit and regulation was that of trade, and yet Askia complained of cheating in weights and measures, of running off with goods and non-payment, of selling pregnant slaves and then quarreling with the buyer over ownership of the child.¹²⁹ Al Maghili suggested that a market overseer would solve many of these problems.¹³⁰ Islamic practices regarding women, i.e., the veil and harem, were not practiced in Songhay because Askia complained of the free mixing of men and women in the markets and the fact that Jenne girls went nude as long as they were virgins.¹³¹ Al Maghili counseled that a very firm hand be taken, but obviously Askia was dealing with a population which was still largely non-Muslim, and it may have been that too firm a hand would have caused revolt. This correspondence did however indicate Askia's sincerity in attempting to implant Islam.

126. Beraud-Villars, Gao, 68.

127. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal-Niger, II, 92.

128. Al Maghili in Basil Davidson, The African Past (Hammondsworth, 1966), 94.

129. Ibid., 94-95.

130. Ibid., 95.

131. Ibid.

From the preceding military discussion, it becomes obvious that Askia was continuing the expansion and consolidation policies of Sonni Ali. One of his most original and outstanding contributions was in the military area. Sonni Ali had relied on an army which he called up from the people as needed, which was quite often due to the constant wars. Thus farmers and artisans had often to neglect their regular occupations. Perhaps Askia had recognized the dangers of such a policy when he was a general under Sonni Ali. He thus created what we know today as a standing army, a group of permanent soldiers who were thus more dedicated and more mobile. Furthermore, the rest of the population was then free to develop agriculture, crafts, and commerce, increasing the prosperity and stability on the village level. The prisoners of war, especially the Mossi, were a source of young captives who were trained as soldiers.¹³² Rouch claimed that the motivation of the campaigns in Dendi, against the Tuareg in Air and Agadez, was the capture of young men to staff the army, because these peoples were particularly admired as brave soldiers.¹³³ The composition of the army therefore underwent a change, and Askia became the commander of a trained group, dependent upon him.

In the administration of the empire, Askia was confronted with many problems. The empire was largely of recent acquisition and was thus in need of unification and cohesion. He promoted Islamic practices as a method of cohesion, but it was not a simple matter to supersede the traditional ways. It was a Sudanese practice to allow conquered peoples to retain at least some of their own organization, customs, and religion.¹³⁴ The governmental organization was decentralized, the governors were chosen from the Askia's family, the husbands of women in his family, or from his loyal followers.¹³⁵ The empire was divided into a number of provinces, some of greater importance than others, each ruled by a governor. These were (1) Dendi, in the southeast, from Agades to Bornu including the Hausa states, governed by the Dendi-fari; (2) Banku, composed of the area between Timbuktu and Gao; (3) Bal, northwest of Timbuktu (not including that city), governed by the Bal-ma; (4) Kurmina, including Gao and Kukia, with its capital at Tendirma, governed by the Gourman-fari (Omar, second in command to Askia); (5) Dirma, to the southwest of Kurmina; (6) Bara, to the southeast of Kurmina; (7) Macina, including Fulani population, governed by the Masina-mangha; (8) Baghena, including the core of the ancient kingdom of Ghana, also Biru and Walata; (9) Hombori, or Tondi, administered by Hombori-koi (not a full-fledged governor); (10) Burgu or Barba.¹³⁶

In addition to the governors of these provinces, the other high offices in the empire consisted of the Balama, probably master of the palace; Hi-koi or chief of the navy; Fario-mondio or head tax collector; the Kori-farina who was the grand priest of traditional religion according to Delafosse¹³⁷ but according to Hama, this interpretation was based on a mistranslation and he was actually the minister of the strangers;¹³⁸ Adiga-farina, function unknown; Sao-farina or chief of

132. Rouch, Contribution, 182.

133. Ibid.

134. Trimingham, History, 97.

135. Hama, Songhay, 172.

136. Heinrich Barth, Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa, IV (London, 1858), 417-422.

137. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal-Niger, II, 87.

138. Hama, Songhay, 154.

the forests, the hunt, and building construction; Ho-Koi-Koi or chief of the fishermen.¹³⁹ In addition to these officials and the governors, each provincial division or city had its administrator, called koi, thus there was the Dirma-koi, the Bara-koi, the Jenne-koi, and each had its own tax collector, the mondio, also.¹⁴⁰ Each of these officials was assigned a certain rank, with specific duties and privileges which were explicit.¹⁴¹

These divisions and officials did not originate with Askia, as has sometimes been implied. Rather, he refined what Sonni Ali had left, but some of the structure had certainly been established by Ali. Under Ali, the army had been governed by young nobles with the title of fari or farma; the best general under Ali was said to be Afoumba, the Dendi-fari, governor of Dendi province.¹⁴² This same position existed under Askia. Askia himself had held the title of tondi-farma, governor of the cliffs and mountains of Hombori, probably equivalent to Hombori-koi. His brother Omar was the Kotala-fari, but unfortunately we cannot locate that district. The Hi-koi existed under Ali;¹⁴³ in fact Ali used water as a means of transportation whenever possible. Kati also mentioned the mondio Ouanki during Ali's reign, so that office also was in existence before Askia. There was also mention of another askia, Baghna, who was perhaps an equal of Mohammad Ture.¹⁴⁴ The terms of Timbuktu-koi and Jenne-koi were certainly in use prior to Askia.¹⁴⁵ Thus Askia was not completely an innovator, although he made some new contributions as in the creation of a standing army.

The empire's unity was based around the Niger River, but there were still essentially two divisions: the old Songhay with Gao as its capital and that of the Timbuktu-Macina area.¹⁴⁶ Sonni Ali had been attached by his traditions to the eastern half; but Askia broke with the traditional orientation and made Timbuktu his second capital.¹⁴⁷ This might have been as a result of his ties with the Muslim scholars in his early reign, or because of his orientation toward Islam, or he may have felt more accepted in the western sector. It could also have been an attempt to balance the old traditional influence against Muslim influence.¹⁴⁸

Commerce flourished under Askia. He instituted the Muslim practice of market inspectors to enforce honesty and justice, as well as standardization.¹⁴⁹ The trading cities of Timbuktu and Jenne prospered, especially since the traders were free from conscription into the army and could devote themselves to trade. Large amounts of European merchandise found its way south to these markets,¹⁵⁰ in exchange for gold, slaves, kola nuts, and ivory.

139. Delafosse, Haut-Sénégal-Niger, II, 87-88.

140. Ibid., 88.

141. Ibid.

142. Rouch, Contribution, 183.

143. Kati, Tarikh, 89.

144. Ibid., 88.

145. Ibid., 84, 86.

146. Beraud-Villars, Gao, 52.

147. Ibid., 62.

148. Beraud-Villars, Gao, 71.

149. Hama, Songhay, 71.

150. Ibid.

In the area of cultural life, Askia certainly provided a climate in which Islamic learning could flourish in Timbuktu and other cities. The major fields of interest were law, religion, education, Arab language and literature, plus rhetoric, logic, eloquence, diction, Malekite law, grammar, astronomy, history, and geography (mathematics was neglected and medicine centered on faith healing).¹⁵¹ Attention was also given to better banking and credit facilities, constructing new and more spacious buildings, and to more elegant dress.¹⁵² Askia modeled his court and his own dress on what he had observed during his pilgrimage, especially in the court of the Khalif of Cairo, thus introducing new influences from the Mediterranean.¹⁵³ The University of Sankore in Timbuktu became the center of Muslim learning, not only for West Africa, but for much of the Muslim world.¹⁵⁴

Conclusions

These then were two men who ruled the Songhay empire during a period of sixty-four years, whose reigns were separated by only a few months, who ruled for twenty-eight and thirty-six years respectively, and yet whose reigns were vastly different. The most important difference seems to have been the basis of their power. Sonni Ali had based his authority on tradition whereas Mohammad Ture had turned to Islam. For whatever reasons, this factor would necessarily inject a different flavor to each reign. Furthermore, each had faced threats to his authority. Sonni Ali had felt that the Muslims were becoming too strong and might destroy his authority, and thus he had to deal harshly with them. He also faced outside threats such as the Mossi, Tuareg, and Fulani. Mohammad Ture had committed himself to making Islam a state religion, for reasons discussed earlier, but the majority of the people living outside the cities were traditionalists. Thus he had to allow some traditional practices to continue and accepted compromise. It was possible that Sonni Ali, through his youthful acquaintance with traditional ways, had realized that Islam did not offer a substitute for all of them, i.e., the immediacy of traditional beliefs and the interrelation of agricultural rites and the practice of farming. Mohammad Ture, however, brought up at court, had more familiarity with Islam and less exposure to traditional beliefs as practiced in the rural areas. It is an interesting irony that Sonni Ali was assumed to have had a Berber origin (although mixed with Negro by his time) whereas Mohammad Ture (if his relationship to Sonni Ali is accepted as legend only) was believed to have been purely Sudanese; yet it was Sonni Ali who espoused traditional ways more closely, and Mohammad Ture who turned more clearly to Islam. It proves at least that the distant Berber origin had little effect by the time of Sonni Ali.

I think it likely, moreover, that Sonni Ali kept up his Muslim practices, even if superficially performed, for a purpose. He had

151. Ibid., 173.

152. Ibid., 172.

153. Ibid.

154. Ibid.

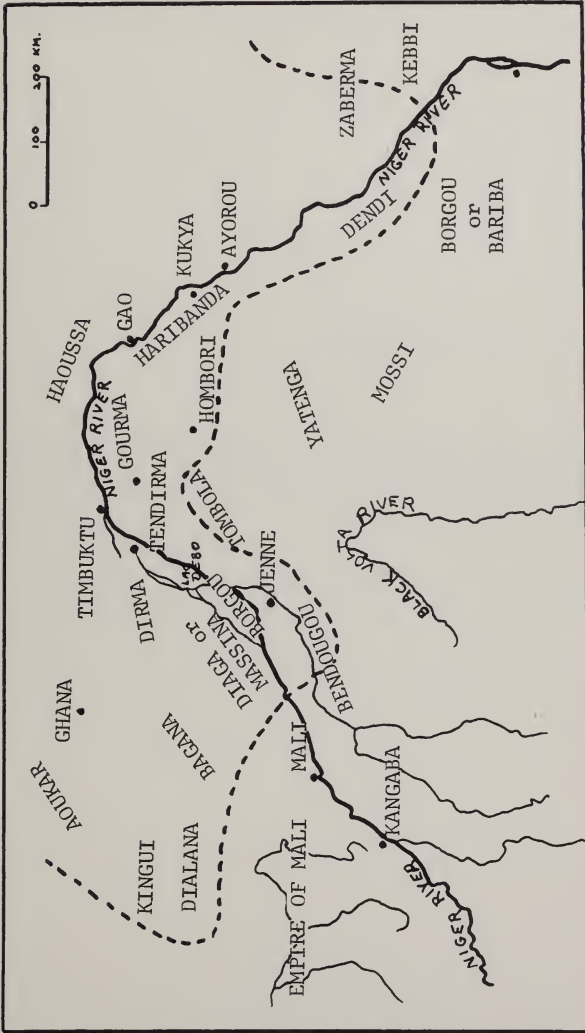
banished the Muslim scholars who spoke out against him; therefore there was no one to criticize him if he did not pray or fast, unless there remained a large enough segment of the population who had accepted Islam and whose loyalty he wished to retain, or who were too powerful or numerous to be suppressed. Thus he was trying to appease them; he knew he could not eliminate Islam, so he tried to limit its power. He saw no harm in participating in both religions, and may even have worked toward a synthesis. In the case of Mohammad Ture, little was known of his devotion to Islam until after his accession to the throne. He probably had assisted Sonni Ali in suppressing the Muslims, Fulani, and Tuaregs. There was no record that he objected to those policies; in fact, he also fought against the Muslims led by Tenguella. I feel that his strong attachment to Islam was a result of his pilgrimage, which he had undertaken for political purposes. He was greatly impressed by the Muslim countries through which he traveled, and decided to use Islam as a means of cohesion at home, especially as he needed a unifying force other than tradition. Perhaps he had also appealed to the Muslim scholars, whom Sonni Ali had rejected, in the early days of his rise to power, being both in debt to them as well as attempting to use them as his tool. Thus these two leaders viewed Islam from widely differing angles.

When Sonni Ali had come to power, Songhay controlled the Niger from the bend southeast to Dendi. He was requested to rid Timbuktu of the Tuareg, and having accomplished that in 1468, it was logical that he would extend his control to Jenne, in order to gain control of the trade based upon these two cities. In order for this trade to prosper, however, he had also to insure its free transit, and so he took Dirma also, the country between these two cities. The Mossi were opposed to his expansion and he fought four battles against them, defeating them each time but never eliminating them. Sonni Ali, with additional expeditions, secured the central portion of the empire; his most important additions had been Timbuktu and Jenne. Mohammad Ture continued the establishment of Songhay control in areas gained by Sonni Ali, and also fought against the Mossi, conducting his only jihad there in 1498-1499. The Mossi were defeated but he neither eliminated nor converted them. He continued Ali's policy of attacking the outlying territories of the declining Mali empire, wresting Bagan and Dialana from Mali. His expeditions to the north, in Agades, broke the Tuareg power, who had also been an enemy of Ali. He extended Songhay dominion over Katsina and Borgou, but was stopped in the southeast by Kebbi in 1516-1517. The new territories added by the Askia had only a tenuous connection with the empire, mainly that of paying tribute; I do not think he was able to establish himself firmly in them. Rouch felt that the defeat against Kebbi marked the end of Songhay expansion; Mohammad Ture had enlarged the empire, improved the administration, but had not succeeded completely in substituting Islam for traditions as the basis of his authority.¹⁵⁵ Sonni Ali's reign has been characterized as one of constant military expeditions, in contrast to that of Askia which brought calm and prosperity.¹⁵⁶ But I think we have seen that this opinion was the result of a prejudiced view of Sonni Ali. Military activity certainly continued as a major factor under Askia. Thus it is necessary to redress the balance

155. Rouch, Contribution, 199.

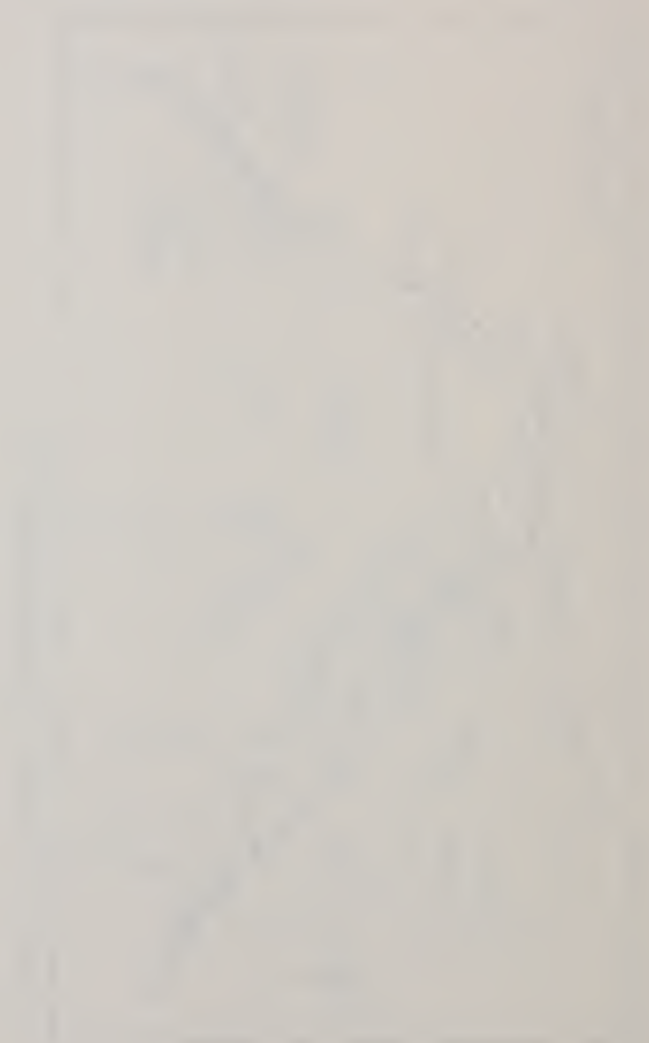
156. Es-Sadi, Tarikh, 112.

between these two rulers, and realize that Askia was the continuation in many important respects of Sonni Ali. The important difference came in the area of religious position vis-à-vis Islam, but this factor, although major, should not be allowed to cloud the other issues. The differences between these two rulers were not as great as has been assumed, but centered rather around personality and use of religion.



Adapted from Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, 119.

SONGHAY EMPIRE



PART II

NINETEENTH-CENTURY CENTRAL SUDAN



CHAPTER 4

A MUSLIM POLITICAL TRACT FROM NORTHERN NIGERIA: MUHAMMAD BELLO'S UŞŪL AL-SIYĀSA

B. G. Martin

Muhammad Bello (1781-1837) was the son of 'Uthmān dan Fodio of Sokoto, the leader of the Fulani jihād in Northern Nigeria, and the nephew of 'Abdallāh dan Fodio. In the history of the nineteenth-century Islamic reform movement in the Western Sudan, he is hardly less important than his father and uncle. Like them, Bello was a prolific writer. A recent list of his compositions includes ninety-five titles.¹ In this list appear books on history, on sufism and the Qādirī brotherhood, on grammar, commentaries (on both poetical works and the Qur'ān), medical matters and ophthalmology, genealogy, on the origins of the Fulani people, biographical materials about his father, treatises on the uses of astronomy and the drawbacks of astrology, writings on the expected Mahdī, and other contemporary religious and political problems of every kind.²

Bello's purely political writings come to about half a dozen, but in many other places and passages he gives his views about the caliphate and the imamate or about political theory in general, as in his most famous book, the often-quoted Infāq al-maysūr fī ta'rīkh bilād al-Takrūr.

The Uşūl al-siyāsa wa kayfīyat al-makhlāṣ fī umūr al-ri'āsa ("The Fundamentals of Statecraft and the Way of Deliverance in matters of leadership") was written as a piece of advice to 'Umar Dallājī, first Fulani Amīr of Katsina, a town to the northeast of Sokoto. 'Umar Dallājī himself came from the town of Yandoto, south of Katsina, in the South Katsina or Katsina Laka region. He had played an important part in the jihād, and had served as a flag-bearer and emissary to Yandoto on 'Uthmān dan Fodio's behalf. He then led the military operations against the Habe ruler of Katsina. He was famous for his learning, and had been on the pilgrimage. Bello complied with 'Umar's request for a "few words" about administration and politics: evidently he was in the habit of doing this for his subordinates, for he had written two similar treatises for Ya'qūb, Amīr of Bauchi.³

1. See D. M. Last, The Sokoto Caliphate (London, 1967), 244-248.
2. Books which seem to be largely on politics in this list are: Al-Ghayth al-wabl fī sīrat al-imām al-'adl; Al-I'lām bi-mā yaḥib 'ala'l-imām min hifz baydat al-Islām; Al-Insāf fī dhikr mā fī masā'il al-Khilāfa; Kitāb al-tahrīr fī qawā'id al-taṣīr li'l-siyāsāt; Shifā' al-asqām fī ma'rifat madārik al-aḥkām; and the Uşūl al-siyāsa.
3. See Last, Caliphate, 244, 246, for Al-Ghayth al-shu'būb fī tawṣīyāt al-Amīr Ya'qūb, Al-Qawl al-mawhūb . . . , etc.

Although the Uṣūl al-siyāsa is not dated, Bello speaks in the introduction of 'Umar Dallāji as a warrior who was still fighting, but had already achieved "high position" and "power." This may indicate that the treatise was written soon after 'Umar had become Amīr of Katsina. As the successful Fulani assault on the town took place about 1806, and since the Infāq al-maysūr (1812) lists 'Umar as being Amīr of Katsina on that date, this span of six years seems likely as the time of composition of the book.⁴ 'Umar Dallāji was still ruling Katsina when he died in 1835.

To resolve the problem of the origins of Bello's political thought and to unravel his vision of a vanished ideal is not easy. All the same, the "Fundamentals of Statecraft" contains a number of Bello's principal ideas, and it deserves translation for that reason. In the Uṣūl al-siyāsa, Bello is writing a generalised statement, a distilled version of his views, as authoritative, yet practical guidance to a particular amīr. Thus he begins with some proverbs and anecdotes and sayings of the Prophet, with a warning against laziness in office. The final observation in the introduction, about politics being derived from justice, has an Aristotelian ring about it.

With his first principle, Bello moves into the domain of Islamic political theory. Although this principle and many of those to follow might have been derived from his reading of early general discussions of the caliphate like that of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baḡdādī's Uṣūl al-Dīn (c. 1035), it is more likely that they are inspired by later writers of the post-Abbasid period like Ibn Taymiya (d. 1327), his famous pupil Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya (d. 1350), and from Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamā'a (d. 1366). In his discussion of the first principle, Bello also acknowledges his indebtedness to his father's Kitāb al-Farq or "Book of the Difference between the governments of the Muslims and the governments of the Unbelievers,"⁵ In the Kitāb al-Farq, 'Uthmān dan Fodio had included a quotation from Ibn Jamā'a.⁶

Bello's third principle, the need for close association between good men of religion and the amīr, seems to echo the third section of his father's book, and his father's observation about those who strive for the amirate not deserving to have it is found in the same passage. Both Bello and his father emphasize justice for the subjects and the

4. See the comments on the dating of this book by J. O. Hunwick in Research Bulletin (Ibadan), III, 2 (1967), 141-142. There is more information about 'Umar Dallāji in Last, Caliphate, passim, and S. J. Hogben and A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Emirates of Northern Nigeria (London, 1966), Ch. XVI, 156-183, on Katsina, including a genealogical chart of the Dallazawa amīrs of Katsina (descendants of 'Umar Dallāji) on p. 183.
5. Mervyn Hiskett, "Kitāb al-farq, a Work on the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to 'Uthmān dan Fodio," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, XXIII, 3 (1960), 558-579.
6. This quotation (p. 564) is apparently not from the prose work of Ibn Jamā'a, Tahrīr al-aḥkām fī tadbīr ahl al-Islām (the Arabic text of which may be found in Hans Kofler, "Handbuch des islamischen Staats- und Verwaltungsrechtes von Badr al Dīn ibn Jamā'a," Islamica, VI & VII (1935), 349-414 & 1-34) but rather from a versified abridgement by an unknown author, perhaps one of the titles listed by Carl Brockelmann, Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur Supplementbände, II, 78.

amīr's good works, just as they stress sympathy for one's own subjects, and praise for personal tolerance and flexibility. Bello has little to say about the office of wazīr, but the post had less significance in the case of a local ruler. Nor is much said in the "Fundamentals of Statecraft" about tax collectors or tax collection, which is not to be oppressive. Bello's fourth principle implies that tax collectors, like others of the amīr's subordinates, must be closely supervised by him at all times.

Further evidence about the origins of Bello's political views can be found in two of his other books, the Shifā' al-asqām fī ma'rifat madārik al-aḥkām and the Kitāb al-tahrīr fī qawā'id al-taḥṣīr li'l-siyāsa. In the first section of the Shifā', Bello says that he read with his father more than 20,000 books, and a good proportion of these must have dealt with the caliphate and other political questions. In the Kitāb al-tahrīr,⁷ Bello cites such political writers as the Egyptian scholar al-Qarāfī's Kitāb al-iḥkām fī'l-farq bayn al-fatāwī wa'l-aḥkām, and a book (whose title is not mentioned) by the famous Ibn Rushd or Averroes, and an unidentified book by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya.

Bello's dependence on his father and his uncle make it obvious that all three of them were familiar with the same texts (no doubt from 'Uthmān's personal library) and so possessed a common intellectual ambiance, based on very similar educations. Drawing on these common sources, they developed political views which ran parallel. Yet each one of them developed his own interests and interpretations merely because the circumstances of each were different. As the chief theorist of the jihād, 'Uthmān had necessarily to develop his ideas as to why withdrawal from the company of the syncretists was inevitable, and why friendship with unbelievers and association with them was undesirable. He had then to investigate the state structure which would best conform to Islamic practice, as he understood it by reading the influential political manuals current in his time.

But his son and his brother 'Abdallāh had other aims. Bello squeezed 'Abdallāh out of the caliphate. All the same, 'Abdallāh had great practical experience, although not to the same degree as Bello. Hence, 'Abdallāh's circumstances and his irritation at Bello led him to be the most theoretically oriented of the three. This tendency may be seen in his Diwā al-hukkām⁸ and his Diwā al-sulṭāniya -- in contrast

7. Published by the Gaskiya Corporation, Zaria, 1963. Al-Qarāfī (one of three Egyptian authors by this name known to Brockelmann, who does not list this title) is mentioned on p. 35, Ibn Rushd on p. 44, and Ibn Qayyim on p. 50. Other writers cited here are Ahmad Zarrūq, Al-Tanḥīd, p. 6, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, Yawāqūt, p. 23, and Ibn Farḥūn's Tabṣīra, p. 50.
8. In the discussion on the imamate in the Diwā' al-hukkām, Ch. II, 9-21 of the Zaria edition of 1956, 'Abdallāh mentions the following writers on politics, not usually citing the titles of their books: al-Suyūṭī, al-Laḡānī, al-Nafrāwī, Fawākih al-Dawānī, Ibn 'Arabī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Arafa, al-'Allāma Khalīl [b. Ishāq], Al-Tawḍīh, Ibn Qāsim, and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī. The whole of the third faṣl in 'Abdallāh's chapter is a summary of a book by al-Maghīlī, most probably the Ta'rīf fī mā yajib 'ala'l-mulūk.

to Bello, who underlines the utilitarian side of politics and the practical value of a down-to-earth style in administration in his Uṣūl al-siyāsa, and other books.

Indeed, Bello almost always emphasizes practical politics and day-to-day administration, whereas his father and uncle pay much more attention to politics as they ought to be, rather than what they actually are. Then too, in his introduction to the "Fundamentals of Statecraft," Bello complains that having to exercise sovereign power is a great misfortune, as if he spoke from experience and personal conviction. Again, like his father and uncle, Bello is looking backward at an idealised Islamic past, into a historical mirror, from which he tries to reproduce a fugitive vision, the only correct government for the new state. Here the caliph and his amīrs must work out the purposes of the jihād in detail. Above all, they must create a religious and political framework in which the members of the Muslim community can live out their lives righteously, and where their proper conduct on earth will assure them of salvation after death, since this is the entire purpose of the Islamic polity.

Manuscripts of the Uṣūl al-siyāsa accessible include one from the Shahuci Judicial School's collection at Kano (ms. 62, "Native Authority Collection"), and another from the National Archives of Nigeria at Kaduna. The first manuscript, from Kano (ms. B) has a very legible script in the jihādī style influenced somewhat by tābi'ī, but is a very inaccurate and careless copy. Manuscript A, from Kaduna, is in a jihādī hand, and is far less legible, but is coherent and has been copied with some care.⁹ Another manuscript, listed by D. M. Last, may be found in the library of the Nizāmīya School in Sokoto, but has not been seen by the translator.

Other copies are Ibadan mss. 82/508/M 13 and CAD 142 and 158. Another manuscript, used by Björkmann and Brass, formerly at the Hamburg University Library, was destroyed in an air raid on Hamburg during World War Two.¹⁰

I have based my translation on Manuscript A because of its accuracy, making an occasional minor correction from Manuscript B. Manuscript A has neither a date nor the name of the copyist, while Manuscript B was copied by one Muḥammad "for the learned Muḥammad Tukur." Manuscript B has no date; and the photographs I have used for the translation are made from microfilms and do not permit me to give any accurate information as to the dimensions of the paper used nor its watermarks. Manuscript A has 25 lines to the page and is 10 pages long; Manuscript B has 19 lines to the page and is 15 pages in length.

The foliation of Manuscript A is as follows:

9. See A.D.H. Bivar, "The Arabic Calligraphy of West Africa," West African Language Review, VII (1968), 3-15, with plates illustrating these styles.
10. See W. Björkmann, "Zwei Hamburger arabische Handschriften über den Islam im Sudan," Folia Ethno-Glossica, III (1927), 2-4.

fol. 1a, lines 1-4, basmala and doxology;
fol. 1a, lines 4-10, account of the composition of the book;
fol. 1a, line 10 to fol. 2b, line 10, introduction, ḥadīths,
etc.;
fol. 2b, line 10 to fol. 3a, line 18, first political principle;
fol. 3a, line 18 to fol. 3b, line 4, second principle;
fol. 3b, line 4 to fol. 4a, line 5, third principle;
fol. 4a, line 5 to fol. 4b, line 1, fourth principle;
fol. 4b, line 1 to fol. 5a, line 11, fifth principle;
fol. 5a, line 11 to fol. 5b, last line, seventh principle and conclusion.

I would like to express my thanks to Dr. Mervyn Hiskett for the use of his microfilms, and to Dr. Nazir al-Azma for elucidating certain passages in the text. Also, my thanks are due to the Shahuci Judicial School, and to the National Archives in Kano indirectly for the use of their material.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم صلى الله على سيدنا محمد وآله
 وصحبه وسلم تسليما قال العبد الفقير المذنب مولانا العبد محمد
 بن عثمان المعروف ببطل الحمد لله الذي انعم علينا بنعمة
 الايمان والاسلام وهذا كتاب سيدنا ومولانا محمد عليه
 من الله نحل افضل الصلاة وازكى السلام اما بعد وقد سالت
 الاخ المديون الغلام الرجيم الذي هو كالاخ الشفيق الشفيق
 عمر داج النجاشي الذي هو في جهاد نصرته الله واولاد الله
 واخذت اذنه وانيه بروح منه واكثر الصلاة ان اكتب له كتابا
 تشتمل على اصول الشياخنة وكيفية التعامل مع امور الدنيا
 ستة فاجبت به بعد الاستشارة والتمس المستشار واعلم
 يا اخي ان من اعظم البلاء على العبد ان يكون عمره او اميرا
 لما يكثر عليه من الحساب الكثير من العبد محاسب
 على قوائمه واجماله واحواله وان كان اميرا فمستشرون
 على عينته وكيف هو في نفسه ومع الله محاسب على اعمال
 وعينته وذلك فيمن من اظامه الله في الخمول فليحمد الله
 هاته طمحة عليه من الحساب الكثير وكان من اهل الحساب
 اليسير وفداء من العبد الذي هو في الدنيا ليس فيه الا العناء
 ولا ينزك عليه من الاخرة الا العذاب ولذلك قال عليه الله
 الصلاة والسلام الا اخبركم بالامارة وما هي فداوا
 بل من سوا الله فداوا فاما ملامته وثنا فيها فاما
 وثنا فيها عذاب يوم القيامة شعر
 اذا رآه الخمر او عبيته فقتل عليه ليلاموب
 قاتله الله لا عن بالولاية فليجتهد في اذا طوف بها
 فداها وان كانت بليته فمن اعظم النعم التي من فداها
 بحفها

عز

يتعبدوا وشكروا صفا انال من السعادة ملائمة لاهل ولا
 سعادة بعد هذا الخبر من قصر غير النعم من نعمها والتسليم
 واصفا حمل من شفاوق لانها كلة لاهل ولا تشكوا بعد هذا
 الا انك خبر بالله تعالى والى الله عن عظم قدر الولاية وصحة
 خطر ما مارور عن الرسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم انه
 قدر عذر السلطان يوما في احد الايام من عبادته سبعين سنة
 وفار عليه الملاءة والسلام اذا كان يوم من اعيادهم لا يبيع قتل
 ولا قتل الاخر الذي فيستقل بطلب سبعة انايس سلطان عاقل
 من عيشته وشبابه نشاء في عبادته ربا وزيرا في الشورى
 وقليته في الصلوة ورجل من عباد الله ورجل في الله في كل يوم
 فلم تزل معه في خلقه ورجل معه امرأة ذات جمال وجمال
 وما انك تحسن اليه في افعال انك انك الله لا تفل ورجل
 نصد عن سبيل هيبه ولم يشكرها في شفاوق فلا عليه
 اقول الملاءة وازي السلام احد الناس الراب والاربع من
 السلطان العادل واربعة من الله والاربع من السلطان
 الجابر عليه الملاءة والسلام والى نفس محمد بنه
 انه يشرف السلطان العادل الى السماء من العمل مثل عمل
 صلة الرعية وكل صلة في صليته ما تعدل سبعين الف صلة
 في ذلك الحين كبرك ولا نعمة اقل من ان يحسن العبد رغبة
 السلطنة ويجعل ساعة من عمره بجميع عمر غيره ومريم
 يعرف قدر هذه النعمة واستغل ثمنه وفوائده يخاف عليه
 ان يجعل الله من خلقه اعداءه ومما يدور عن عظم خطر
 الولاية ملوور عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما ان رسول
 الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لما بعث الاسام فلم خلقه بيان
 الكعبة وكان في البيت زعم من يري في اناس اذ ان في بيت

عَامِلُوا رِغَابًا كُمْ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْيَاءَ إِذَا سَأَلْتُمْ الرِّحْمَةَ فَأَرْحَمُوا
 صَوْمًا وَإِذَا حُكِّمْتُمْ فَاغْدُوْا فِيهِمْ وَأَعْمَلُوا بِمَا تَقْدِرُونَ
 فَمَنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ بِهَذَا فَبَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَةُ اللَّهِ يَقْبِضُوْنَ
 صُنْعَهُمْ وَأَلْقَوْهُمَا فِي النَّارِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَتَرَكْتُمْ
 بَيْنَ خَصْمَيْهِمْ وَلَمَّا كُنْتُ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ وَقَالَ عَلَيْهِ
 السَّلَامُ وَالسَّلَامُ ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
 مُنَاطِلَانِ كَادِي وَشَيْخُ زَارٍ وَفَتِيَّةٌ مُتَكَبِّرَةٌ لَمْ يَنْتَبِذْ
 اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ تَفْتَحُونَ قُلُوبَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَيُظْهِرُ
 أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَجَنَاحَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ فِي النَّارِ الْأَمْرُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَبَّحَانَهُ
 وَتَعْلَى وَتَسُبُّهُ سُبُلُ التَّقْوَى وَأَدْرَاكَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ
 وَالسَّلَامُ قَالُوا كَيْدُ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَشْرُهُمْ وَهُمْ
 يَتَمَتَّعُونَ بِمَنْ يَتَمَتَّعُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ الْأَمْرُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةُ
 وَقَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَالسَّلَامُ مَنْ فِي أَمْرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَمْ يَنْفَعْهُمْ
 كَيْفَ عَدَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِهِ فَقَدْ تَبَّ وَأَمَّا عِدَّةٌ مِنْ النَّارِ عَلَيْهِ
 السَّلَامُ وَالسَّلَامُ رَجُلَانِ مَرَامَتُهُمَا شَرٌّ مِمَّا تَرَى
 قُلُوبُهُمَا وَصَبَدْنَاهُ فِي النَّارِ يَتَعَدَّى فِي الْحُدُودِ وَعَلَى عَلَيْهِ
 السَّلَامُ وَالسَّلَامُ أَشَدُّ النَّاسِ عَذَابًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ السُّلْطَانُ
 الظَّالِمُ وَقَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَالسَّلَامُ خَمْسَةٌ قَدْ عَقِبَهُ اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَرْشَدَهُ أَمَّا عَقِبَهُ وَمُضِيْرُهُمْ إِلَى النَّارِ
 يَأْتِيَهُمْ فِيهِمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَلَا يَرْجِعُ الظُّلُمُ
 عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ وَلَا يَمْلَأُونَ بَيْنَ الْقَوَى وَالْجَوَى
 وَيُحْكَمُ بِالْبَيْتِ وَالْمَحَارِبِ لَا يَرْجِعُ إِلَّا بِمَا أَهْلُهُ وَأَوْلَادُهُ
 بِمَا عَاتَى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَلَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ أَمْوَالُ الدُّيْنِ وَلَا يَلِيْلُهُمْ مِنْ أَيْدِي
 يَطْمَعُهُمْ وَلَا يَسْتَأْجِرُ أَجِيرًا فَيَتَّقِمُ عَمَلَهُ وَلَمْ يَفْعَلْ أَجْرَهُ
 وَرَجُلٌ ظَلَمَ زَوْجَتَهُ فِي مَذَاقِهَا أَرْحَمُ مِنَ الْخَطَايَا

رضي الله

١٢٥٠

نك

رضى الله عنه شيعة يومها جنازة وقد قدم رجل مصر عن الجنازة
 فلما دبر الميت وضع ذلك الرجل يده على قبره وقرأ اللهم
 ارحمنا ورحم من قبلنا ورحم من بعدنا ورحم من كان قبلنا
 والى رضى الله عنه وطوبى لهما الميت ارحم من كان قبلنا
 او جدينا فلما تكلم هذه الكلمات غاب شخص من عيون
 الناس فلما علم من الخطاب رضى الله عنه بطلبه فطلب ولم يوجد
 فقال عمر بن الخطاب هذه الخنزير عليه السلام واعلم ان اصول
 السياسة لا يغير من حلالها الى حرامها والعدل والعدل هو
 السياسة كلها فاما انما منها تتعلمون الامير او الولا او ال
 مام وانما منها تتعلمون المجلس والحق والحق الثلاثة
 الاخير تتعلمون بالبرهان اما الاول فبما هو ان يكون
 الامير او المام او الولا تقينا لله ورسوله متبعا لسنة رسوله
 صغرا وكبريا عليه وسلم فمستغنا بغيره اضرته وافعاله
 حده وادامته زاهدة او بدنية فمستغنا بغيره اضرته وافعاله
 بده ان لا يتر عن في الولاية واعلم ان صلاح الامير كله ان يكون
 الامار لا يغير مستورا فبما هو ان يكون الامير او الولا
 ان طلبها عنها فبما هو ان يكون الامير او الولا
 عليه فبما هو ان يكون الامير او الولا
 الكلام فبما هو ان يكون الامير او الولا
 كله وشيعة الامام الشريعة وهو معترف بالفتنة ولا
 لم يزل كذلك فبما هو ان يكون الامير او الولا
 بقاء ذلك من الرئاسة والكرامة لا يسلم فيه الا من
 عصمة الله فبما هو ان يكون الامير او الولا
 لجان فيه تعريف بالفتنة والشارع لا يدر ما فيه فتنة
 بل من غير الامارة الا ان يكون الامير او الولا
 نولا الولاية الذين لهم شوكه فبما هو ان يكون الامير او الولا

جاور
 على
 روى
 روى
 روى

بعضها

عما اتهموا ولا يصح لاحد اخذ الخراج من القواد ولا من جهاد ولا من
مال الكوفة من سبيل الله وما عتق مجاهد الخلو وجب نصب الامام
الا عظم ونفاته من سبيل الله والارض من كبر واما غير ذلك من القوم
فما كان له من يكون نظام العالم عليه اذ يوم الامارة اذا طلب
الخلع اخذ حقوقهم من كسبهم بالثبوت تخمسهم انما يقتل
خلع كسبهم من قتل رجل واحد وجب عليه العتق
واذا قتلوا او اصابوا لم يكن قياهم دية متبعا بقتل راسه
وليس مشتقلا بامر اخره انما جعل نفسه ورعيته عمن
العوايد الدينية الخ لا يشبه العبد بغيره كما هو شأن الملوك
والسلطانين وعزوا في عتقهم انهم يلقون استاسر قتلهم بقوا
بذمهم وفي عتقهم واصحاب رسوم ابلهم وادهم
ولا يزل الوصي او من عظمى العوايد كدبرا عن كابر وتبراعون
فيها موافقة في شريعة واداء الامانة التي قبلها الله تعالى
على العرفاء جهلا منهم وقد كرموا والى في كتاب العرفاء
قيل في القوام اما ان كان غير مشايخ العرب والرياسة وكان
غير جاهلا في عتق عليه ان يشتر من نفسه ولا يعدل في
الرعية لا يلبس ان يقيم الحدود الا من يقيم ولا يحتل منه
كالوالي الا ان كان ان يكون الامام او الامير او الوالي
ليس الجانب مؤثر اجانب العفو وترك الغضب والعقل ليس
الكرم والنجاة من يكون له من محاسن العفة الصبر في الشجاعة
منه والنجاة من يكون له من محاسن العفة الصبر في الشجاعة
الغضب والعقل ليس الكرم والنجاة من يكون له من محاسن العفة
ويقيم الحق عنه كما كان تعالى في مقامه من الله يست
الهم ولو كانت في غلبه الغضب لا يعضوا من حوله واعف
عنهم واما ان لم يكن شجاعا في عتق عليه ان يشتر منه الامر
لهذا نزول المعصاة او يتخير عنه نزول البلاء والعرف في
امره ويبيع امر رعيته والافواه ان يكون فعلى الغيب ثابت

الجاهل

الموديعين لا طهار والخطايا والمعتقسين والساعين لفرادة
 وافتقارهم لغيرهم المطلبين والمعتقدين وطريقهم على
 الله عنه كثير ما يتوقفوا على غيرهم من رعيته يخدمهم فيهم
 وهم الجوهرية فقال الخمس البصير سينا عمر بن الحسن بالخدمة
 في البيت ثم عثر امرأته من الالهة ثم جعل فزيرة فصارها وقد
 كثر أن لها عيالاً أو تيسر لها كادهم وانها تخرج من البيت
 فتسفيهم من الماء وتكره أن تخرج بالتمار فيجعل عمر عنها
 الفزيرة ويخرج منزلاً وفراغاً على عمر عذوبة وقد
 مكى وفراغاً عن فراغاً وقد عليه ماذا من به فخرجت أنه
 الذي صلي عمر بن الحسن في بيتهم ثم عثر على امرأته وافرأها
 بخادمهم ونجفة الاله السابعة أو يكون الامير والامام
 أو الوالي فيقوم معاملة الرعية وهو ان جعل قوامهم
 على جميع المقامات العادلة كل بقدر حاله واماعواهم
 ولا يجعلهم على لا يفرقهم في امر دينهم وفي امور دنياهم
 فليقتلهم في تعريضهم مولاهم وامرهم بالواجبات المتعين
 على وجوبها وفيهم غير المنكر ان المتعوفة على غير
 بعضها ويوسع لهم في الصالحات ولو اختلف فيها ولا يشدد
 لهم في الواجبات ولا يحرمون الاختلاف فيها واولي المكرو
 هناك بل لا يبادر الى الاطراف عليهم ويخرج عقابهم ويظلم
 عباد الله ومعاملاتهم بامور ولد ما يعجز المعتقدين
 بعقله ورايه من غير ان يرد صريحة في كتاب او سنة الا اذا
 ضالوا لا جعل في المطلوب صلهم على ما شرع الله
 صريحاً وفيما جميع ما استنبط ليس بشرع معصوم به
 تعين والما هو تشريع عباده ولذا لا وقع فيه الخلاف ولا
 يسأل الله عنه العبد في الاخرة فلا ينبغي ان يفرقهم بالاجابات
 انهم الا ان يكون بلطف وارشاد فقد لك نفع واحسان وفي
 الحديث ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قد اجمع على طلال
 الغزاة

الغزاة ارونكم منعير منكر اعليه او كما قال ما نظر يا افي
في ثواب طول الغزاة في الملاحة عند الله طيب انظر من الله
عليه وسلم معاذ خير من اتباعه على القيام الطويل لما
في ترك من المشقة وكذا انك تعلم على المشاوير الامور
التي تسع لهم من الله عليه وسلم وقال ما تركت لكم
وهو عفو بامور فاستها المجتهدون بالاشهاد والنظام
وفي الحديث من ترك شيئا من امر الله فاجتنبوا
ان يتفق عليه ومن ترك شيئا من امر الله فاجتنبوا
جونه واخشى من الدعوة التي عليك حيث منعت على
امت فيما وسع لهم وكان من الله عليه وسلم اعلم الناس
بالله والنفاهم كان بها من الدعوة على قدر احوالهم كما قيل
فجاء الامراء واذى العنا وغير حتى قيل له واعظ عليهم
وتناله الى صناديدهم يذوق الاموال اعظم لهم ليس
الايمان في غلبهم اولين وجعلوا الى الايمان بالله او يوسع
لهم في المجلس او يوترهم بالعبادة والوسادة ويعبر بقدومهم
عليه ويعتبر في قرائهم ويحجبهم بغيرهم بما امكن وكان
يقول اكرموا كريم قومناكم ويكرهوا الايمان الربا ايمانهم
ويعلمهم المشاوير فخر ايمانهم وغير ما وروى
على كتب سيرة من الله عليه وسلم علم ما ذكرناه من
عمل خلافة لغيره كما اكرم رسول من انجسكم عن الله عليه ما
غنتهم حريم عليكم بالموثيقين وفرضهم ما نوا فضل
حسب الله لا اله الا هو عليه توحيد وهو رب العرش
العظيم

Uṣūl al-Siyāsa

(Alr, Blr) In the name of God, the merciful,
the compassionate!

May God bless our master Muhammad and his family and his companions and grant him salvation!

The impoverished slave of his Wealthy Master, Muḥammad bin 'Uthmān, known as Bello, says, "Praise to God who has granted us the benefits of faith and of Islām, and has given us guidance by our lord and master Muhammad -- may God Almighty bestow peace upon him and the best of blessings and well-being!

NOW THEN, I have been asked by the sincere brother and upstanding friend, the kind 'Umar Dallājī, the warrior on the Path of God -- may his jihād be justified, may God make him victorious, prolong his power and high position, and aid him with His Spirit, and multiply the number of his supporters! -- to write for him a few words concerning THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITICS, AND THE WAY OF DELIVERANCE IN MATTERS OF LEADERSHIP (Uṣūl al-siyāsa wa kayfiyat al-makhlāṣ fī umūr al-ri'āsa).¹

After practising istikhāra, I have given an answer to him, for God is the One to whom we have recourse for help.²

KNOW, MY BROTHER, that the mightiest of catastrophes that may fall on one of God's servants is to be a chief ('arīf) or an amīr who is charged with heavy responsibilities. Truly, that servant is accountable for his speech, his actions, and his circumstances. If he is an amīr, he will be responsible for both his subjects (ra'iya) and for himself, just as he is for the administrators over his subjects ('ummāl ra'iyatih). Hence it is said, "Whosoever God makes lazy, let him praise God the Almighty, for He has lightened his responsibilities greatly, and He has shielded him from the discomfort of this world here below, for there is nothing but troubles in it." But He has planned for him nothing but torture in the Next World, and for that reason the Prophet declared, "Have you not been told (Blv) what the amirate is?" [His listeners] said, "Yes, O Prophet of God." And he said, "The beginning of it is blame (mallāma), the second part of it is repentance (nadāma), and the third part of it is the torture of the Day of Judgment ('adhāb yawm al-qiyāma)." As the poet says,

(meter: wāfir)

"If indolence drops her tail over you,
You'll sleep a long night in its shadow."³

1. Generally, the second phrase in this title has been read wa kayfiyat al-mukhlis fī umūr al-ri'āsa, but in both the mss. I have used, the word is unmistakably vocalised makhlāṣ, which yields better sense.
2. Istikhāra is a technique for obtaining guidance to a problem in a dream. Formulas for achieving it may be found in many sources, such as the popular book on magic and charms by the Egyptian Shaykh Aḥmad al-Dayrabī (d. 1151/1738), Al-Mujarrabāt al-kabīr (also known as Al-Fath al-Malik al-Majīd, al-mu'allaf li-naf' al-'abīd), Sulaymān Mar'ī (Singapore, 1366/1948), 74-78.
3. I have not been able to trace this line, but it may be a popular jingle, or perhaps a lāmī in the style of the Ayyubid poet Bahā' al-Dīn Zuhayr.

[As for] the person whom God has afflicted with sovereign power (wilāya), let him try to discharge its duties. Although it may be a misfortune, it is at the same time one of the greatest blessings to the person (Alv) who is called to carry it out. So give thanks to the Bestower of it, for it confers happiness without end. But the person who does not tackle it resolutely and gives no thanks to its Bestower will suffer unceasing calamity, for there is no misfortune to compare with it, unless it is unbelief (kufṛ) in God Almighty.

Now the evidence of the might of sovereign power and the glorious part of its importance is what has been told of the Prophet of God, when he said that "The justice ('adl) of a sultān for a single day is better than the devotion [of an ordinary man] for seventy years." He also declared, "On the Day of Judgment, when no shade exists but the Shadow of God, and there is no refuge but His Shadow, seven men will be granted shelter: the sultān who is just towards his subjects, the young man who grows up in devotion to His Lord; the man who stands in the marketplace but has his heart in the mosque; the two men who love each other in God; the man who mentions God when he is alone, when it brings a tear to his eye; the man who is invited by a beautiful and noble woman and who is inclined to her but says [to himself], 'I fear God the Almighty'; and the man who in secret gives alms (sadaqa) with his right hand but does not let his left hand know of it."⁴

The Prophet likewise (B2r) said, "The best-loved and the closest to God is the just sultān, but the most abhorred and the most remote from Him is the tyrannical and despotic ruler."⁴

Muḥammad said, "[I swear] by Him in whose Hand is the soul of Muḥammad, that the just sultān will be raised into Heaven for actions on behalf of all his subjects. The prayer which he makes is worth seventy thousand prayers [by others.]" Since this is so, there is no more glorious gift which may be granted to one of God's servants than the rank of sultān, for He causes one hour of his life to be the equivalent of the entire existence of another person. The man who does not comprehend the significance of this favor and busies himself with oppression must be anxious lest God place him among the number of His enemies.

Another piece of evidence which shows the enormous importance of sovereign power is what is related by Ibn 'Abbās. "The Prophet of God came to us on a certain day, and stayed with the people at the door of the Ka'ba. There was in the house a man of the Quraysh, and the Prophet said, 'O you great men of the Quraysh, (A2r) do three things for your subjects: if they ask you for mercy, grant it to them, and if you govern, do it with justice, and act on what they say. The curse of God and His angels [is on the man who does not act in this way].'⁵ From him, God will accept neither a religious duty nor a work of supererogation."

The Prophet likewise said, "The man who arbitrates between two enemies and commits oppression (B2v) while so doing is cursed by God, for the curse of God is on all tyrants." He also said, "There are

4. B: "The tyrannical ruler who devours tax money."

5. Reading "fa la'nat Allāh wa malā'ikatih 'alayh," as in B.

three people upon whom God will not look at the Day of Judgment: a lying sultān, a fornicating shaykh, and a poor man who gives himself airs." To his companions, the Prophet said one day, "The time will come when you will conquer East and West and they will both be in your hands. All the administrators of places ('ummāl al-amākin) will be in Hellfire except those who have feared God the Almighty and have followed the path of piety and discharged their duties honestly."

The Prophet also asked, "What of a person whom God has placed over the affairs of his subjects, if he deceives them or advises them wrongly or is unsympathetic to them? Does God not exclude him from Paradise?" He likewise said, "The man who is in charge of the political affairs of the Muslims and does not guard them as he would guard the people of his own family has built a sitting place for himself within the Fire." And Muḥammad declared, "Two men from my community will not obtain my intercession: the oppressive ruler and the fanatical religious innovator (mubtadi' ghāl), for they have both overstepped the limits." Further, he said, "The person who will feel the greatest tortures on the Day of Judgment is the tyrannical sultān."

Muḥammad also said, "Five people have incurred the wrath of God and His keenest anger, and their place is in the Fire: the amīr who draws his sustenance from the people but does not bother to treat them justly or relieve their oppression, the chief of a people who give him things, but who fails to strike a balance between the strong and the weak and judges vengefully or by caprice; the man who does not instruct his children to be obedient to God Almighty, fails to instruct them in the essentials of religion, and does not care where they obtain their food; the man who hires an employee, and when the man has done his work, fails to pay him (B3r) his wages; and the person who treats his wife shabbily over her dowry."

It is said of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, that when he was paying his farewells one day at a funeral, he met a man who was praying there. When the dead man had been buried, that man put his hand on the tomb and said, "O God, if you tortured him, it is your right because he disobeyed you. If you have pardoned him, it was because he was in need of your mercy. So blessings on you, O dead man, unless you were an amīr, or a chief or a tax collector or bureaucrat." When he had spoken these words, he vanished before the eyes of the people. 'Umar sent after him, but he could not be found, and 'Umar said, "That was Khidr -- peace be upon him!"⁶

KNOW that the principles of politics are seven, and that their essence is derived from the meaning [of the word] justice ('adl). Two principles have to do with the amīr, the wālī, or the imām,⁷ two with administrators and people who sit in council (julasā'). The remaining three have to do with the subjects (ra'īya).

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE is that the amīr, the imām, or the wālī should fear God, and should be a follower of the Sunna of God's Prophet. He should be concerned with his hereafter and should observe the limits laid down by God, a man who has renounced worldly pleasures and is far from liking leadership [for its own sake], yet who still

6. Khidr is sometimes identified with Elias or St. George.
7. See introduction for a discussion of these offices.

wishes to rule. Know that the most appropriate course is that the man who obtains leadership will be accountable for it. The person whom we see striving hard for it causes us to think that he does not deserve to have it. And the person who takes it for himself has already committed oppression, for he has put something where it did not deserve to be. If it is a question of leadership, then that is part of the harmony of the world (nizām 'ālim), the implementation of the rules of the Divine Law (Shar'ia). For this reason, there is no ḥadīth recorded for us which concerns the establishment of the Great Imām or his deputies, precisely because leadership and greatness lie in that point. No person is saved from it except by God's grace. If the Lawgiver commanded us explicitly to seek the imamate, it was because it was becoming open to public disturbance. The Lawgiver did not command the public disturbance which took place; instead, He hindered the amirate from existing until there was a responsible man to assume it. When it became known that had it not been for the wālis who possess power, no person would have been safe in his own house, to say nothing of (A3r) [being safe] in the wilderness, [it became clear that] it would not have been permissible for any person to take kharāj from the peasants, nor would a jihād have been legal. Money would not have been found for spending on the Path of God, and the welfare of the people would have been lost. Therefore, the selection of a Great Imām and his deputies, wazīrs and amīrs, becomes a necessity. And he is established so that the interest of religion may be guaranteed, and the entire harmony of the world likewise. If it were not for the amirate, if people sought to obtain their rights from each other without a power or force to protect them, it might happen that men would be killed before they could kill a single individual whose killing was necessary. It is for this reason that people say that if [a ruler] is impious or is not a follower of the Sunna of His Messenger, and does not concern himself with the matter of his hereafter, he may carry himself and his subjects into repugnant practices opposed to the Sunna of Muḥammad, as is often the case with kings and sultāns. Among them, the erosion of the foundations of their own states through the revival of the practices of their forefathers and ancestors is well known. (B3v) From father to son, they continue to take turns with those practices which are in opposition to the Divine Law. Hence they are ignorant of how to carry out the responsibility of the charge which God Most High has laid on chiefs ('urafā'). My father ('Uthmān dan Fodio) has discussed this matter in his Kitāb al-Farq, and it may be read there.⁸ And if he [ruler] is not somewhat removed from the love of leadership and the desire of sovereignty for itself, one may fear that he is infatuated with himself and will not deal justly with his subjects. It is not appropriate that the limits should be established except by a person who is removed from the matter and is not hampered by it, like the wālī.⁹

(B4r) THE SECOND PRINCIPLE is that the amīr or the imām or the wālī should be flexible, capable of granting pardon, able to forget rancor, inclined to generosity and tolerance. The most highly prized

8. See Mervyn Hiskett, "Kitāb al-farq, a Work on the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to 'Uthmān dan Fodio," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, XXIII, 3 (1960), 566 ff.

9. This entire passage, beginning with the phrase, "If a ruler is impious . . ." and ending with "like the wālī," appears out of order in B, where it is inserted on folio B3r (line 16) and goes on to folio B3v (line 7).

qualities of his nature will be openhandedness, and patience in the sense of courage. If it happens that he is inflexible, without any inclination to generosity or tolerance, then he will have to fear that the people will become tired of him and will scatter, as God the Almighty has said, "Because of God's mercy, be easy on them: if you have been thick-skinned and hard-hearted, they will run from fear of you, so pardon them." If it happens that he has no courage, he may risk being overtaken by events if he experiences difficulties, or become confused when he is confronted with catastrophes or annihilation. His standing will decrease and the affairs of his subjects will be ruined. It is more worthy for him to be unshakeable and firm in temper, a steady support to his administrators and subjects, [otherwise] they will turn over to him every important or difficult matter. If he is not a free giver, he may risk being thought stingy in paying money for good reasons on behalf of his subjects. The people may blame him and do without him, which is not appropriate.

THE THIRD PRINCIPLE is that the imām or the amīr or the wālī should always be craving for the company of the learned men of religion and be intent on listening to their advice to him. The ruler must be wary of the evil men of religion ('ulamā' al-sū'), (B4v) who are greedy for worldly things. They will praise you (sic) and glorify you and seek to propitiate you by being greedy for what you possess of the dross of this world and ill-gotten gains, so that they may obtain some of it by double-dealing and trickery.

Now the pious learned man is the one who does not envy what money you possess, and treats you as you deserve in his preaching and his talk, just as they say that Shaqīq al-Balkhī went to Hārūn al-Rashīd, who said to him, "Are you Shaqīq the Ascetic?" He answered, "I am Shaqīq but I am not an ascetic." Hārūn said, "Command me," so Shaqīq said, "God Most High has put you here in the place of [Abū Bakr] al-Ṣiddīq, and He seeks from you his style of alms-giving, and He has entrusted you with the place of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb al-Fārūq (lit.: 'he who distinguishes truth from falsehood') and He seeks from you the same differentiation between right and wrong, and He has put you in the place of ['Uthmān] Dhū'l-Nūrayn, and He requires from you his way of life and his generosity, and He has placed you in the place of 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, and He seeks from you knowledge and justice, just as He sought it from him."

Rashīd said, "Go on," and Shaqīq declared, "Yes; know that God Almighty has a place known as Hell. He will make you the doorkeeper of that place, and will give you three things, a treasury, a whip, and a sword, and He will order you to prevent people from entering the Fire with these three things. The man who comes to you with a request should be let into the treasury; the person who disobeys His Lord's command should be punished with the whip, and he who kills some one for no (B5r) reason, kill him with the sword, with the permission of the dead man's wālī.¹⁰ If you do not do as He orders you, then you will become the leader of the People of the Fire and the headman of the House of Perdition."

Rashīd said, "Continue with what you are saying," so Shaqīq went on, "People like you are like a spring of water, and the rest of the administrators of this world are like streams flowing out of it.

10. The word wālī in this context must mean wālī al-dam, an avenger in a blood feud.

If the spring is pure, the streams will have no impurity, but if the spring is foul, then the purity of the streams will be of no advantage." (A3v)

So if the ruler does not keep the company of good learned men, nor listen to their advice, but instead takes evil men of religion as his companions, they may force him along their own line of conduct, or the people may think they are doing so. Truly, a man follows the ethics of his best friend. Some wise verses are:

(meter: ṭawīl)

"Don't ask about the man
But ask about his companion.
Truly, the companion serves
As an example for comparison."¹¹

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE is that the imām or the amīr or the wālī should lay conditions on his administrators, above all, to be just. He should select them from among the best of his men, and should look into their doings at all times. 'Aṣim bin Badhila said, "When 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed an administrator, he stipulated that he should not ride a horse nor dress fashionably nor eat the finest foods, nor lock the doors on the needs of the people, nor what was in their interest. [He used to say], "Distinction should be enough for you. Do not wish for anything more." 'Umar also wrote to his chief administrator, Abū Mūsa al-'Ash'arī, saying "The happiest of governors is he whose subjects are pleased with him, and the most unfortunate of governors is he whose subjects are unfortunate because of him, so beware of oppression. If your administrators follow in your footsteps and become like you, then they are like an animal in a green pasture which eats so much that it becomes fat. Its fatness is the reason for its destruction, for it is slaughtered for its fat and assigned [as food]." The prudent thing is to be on your guard against administrators and servants. For reasons of their own advantage, they will urge the wālī on and make his tyranny acceptable. They will throw him into the fire to gain their objectives. Indeed, your worst enemies are not those who are trying to destroy you, but are instead your administrators and helpers (ghilmān), the majority of whom are slaves to their bellies and their pleasures (furūj) and their greed. To obtain their desires, they will make their amīr into a net [to catch benefits]. They serve themselves, but not him. The sign of this is that they spread a sweet smell. If sovereign power were taken away from him and given to someone else, they would all turn their backs on him and come close to that other person. Wherever there is a dirham, (A4r) they will crowd around the place and prostrate themselves."¹²

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE is that the imām or the amīr or the wālī should order the people of his state to do justice and goodness and avoid tyranny among themselves, to love good and hate evil. The result will be that the character of the people and the administrators will be on the same plane as that of the amīr. If they act rightly in the sight of their Beneficent Master, He will inject mercy into the hearts of their amīrs to do good to them. If they disobey their Lord and outrage the earth with corruption, God will inflict a penalty on

11. A quotation from the Mu'allaqā of Ṭarafa; see A. J. Arberry, The Seven Odes (Cambridge, 1957).

12. An Islamic silver coin.

them, and they and their amīrs will be blamed, for the Almighty has said, "We shall set some oppressors over others," and in the ḥadīth (B5v) it is recorded, "As you are, so you will be governed."

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE is that the imām or the amīr or the wālī is the one who lays down for the people of his state their worldly and religious duties. And he is the one who fosters the artisans (al-ṣunna') and is concerned that people have a trade, which is indispensable to the population, such as cultivators and smiths, dyers and physicians, grocers and butchers and carpenters and all the trades [which contribute] to the harmony of this world. He must allocate them to every village and every [town] and quarter, according to the urging of the people, likewise foodstuffs and supplies as they are needed, and as the towns and country places become filled with population. He must see to the construction of walled towns (ḥuṣūn) and bridges and the maintenance of markets and roads and the realisation of the general public welfare, so that the harmony of this world may be maintained.

In the Jawhara, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib said, "I saw 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb one morning on a saddled animal. I said 'O Commander of the Believers, where are you going?' and he replied, 'With a donkey we will fertilise [a field whose crops are intended as alms] (ṣadaqa).' I followed him and I said, 'Will the caliphs after you not be humble, O Prince of the Believers?' He answered, 'O Abū'l-Ḥasan, do not blame me, for I swear by Him who sent Muḥammad with prophethood, that a lamb might go to the bank of the Euphrates [and fall in] and 'Umar would be asked about it on the Day of Judgment, for there is no mercy for the wālī who lets [the rights] of the Muslims perish.'"

In [Sayyid Ibrāhīm al-] Shibrakhiṭī's [commentary on the Mukhtaṣar¹³ of Khalīl, it is related] that one of the prophets of Banū Isrā'īl asked his Lord about the longevity of the Kings of Persia, for they lived long lives. To him, God revealed that "They inhabited my country, where my worshippers lived." And in the story, it is said that "They treated my servants justly and made my land flourishing, and provided the necessary religious facilities for them by building mosques and making them lively with worship and prayer, establishing judges and teachers there (B6r) and observing their rights in God's patrimony, providing (A4v) instructors for the children, furnishing preachers, muḥtasibs, and tax collectors, and inspectors for the oppressed and the destitute."

'Umar was constantly looking into the problem of the destitute among his subjects and being of service to them personally. In the Jawhara, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī declares that 'Umar was once walking at night to Madīna when he came upon a woman of the Anṣār carrying a waterskin. He asked her about it, and she said she had a family but no servant. She had gone out at night to fill it with water. He was annoyed that she should [even] go out in the daytime [for this purpose], so he carried it for her until she reached her house. He said, "Go to 'Umar early in the morning so that he can help you," and she said, "I will go." She went to him, and while she was there, she

13. According to C. Brosselard, "Les Inscriptions arabes de Tlemen," Revue Africaine, V (1861), 322-325, it is stated that this four-volume work is listed in an inscription of waḡf books at the Darb al-Massūfa Mosque, Tilimsān. No date for this inscription is given.

recognised him as the man who had carried her waterskin. When she had gone away, 'Umar arranged the matter and sent after her, ordering some one to be her servant and giving her support.

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE is that the amīr or the imām or the wālī should deal gently with his subjects, and should put the leading persons among them in eminent positions, each according to his rank. As for the common people, he must not burden them with what is unnecessary either in the religious or in the worldly sense, but see that they recognise their master, and order them to perform the stipulated duties as is required, and forbid them from doing reprehensible actions, and increase their knowledge of what is permissible. (B6v) If there is any difference of opinion over what these are, do not be harsh over what are forbidden things and what are duties, or things about which there is controversy. People who do reprehensible things come first [in condemnation], but do not hurry to disavow them or hurt their beliefs or thwart their activities or their worship in matters which certain mujtahids may have created from their own actions or views, but which are not explicit in the Book or the Sunna, unless they conflict with consensus (ijmā'). What is best is to force them according to what has been explicitly legislated by God. As to what has been contrived but is not in accord with the infallible law of God Almighty, that is mere legislation by man. Hence differences will appear in it, but in the Hereafter, God will not question His servant about it. For this reason, it is not necessary to give a narrow interpretation to individual judgments. [And they say], "O God, do you not act with grace and a guiding hand?" That is charity and good counsel.

In the hadīth, it is recorded that the Prophet of God declared to Mu'ādh [ibn Jabal al-Ansari] when he prolonged the prayers, (A5r) "Truly, you have discouraged people and done abominable things. Look, my brother, at the reward of the prolongation of prayer before God. How did Muḥammad look on Mu'ādh when he forced his followers to stand for a long time when it was a hardship? How can you force them to endure difficulties which the Prophet tolerated?" He said, "What I had left to you is the pardoning of matters which mujtahids have created though by analogies and similarities."

And it is said in the hadīth, "He who takes responsibility for a certain matter concerning my community, and is concerned with them, O God, be concerned with him: (B7r) and he who takes responsibility for a certain matter concerning my community and treats them kindly, O God, treat him with kindness." [Another hadīth is], "I fear for you, that the Prophet may summon [God] against you, for you have straitened [the situation] of my community, where God had made it easy for them."

Now Muḥammad was the most learned of the people about God and the most pious of them, and he used to deal with the subjects according to their circumstances, and he tolerated the roughness of the nomads ('arāb) and the insults of the hypocrites to the point that he was told to be more harsh with them. He won over their champions by the payment of large sums to them, so that their trust would be firm in their hearts, and so that they might return to faith in God, and allowed them into his council and preferred them for the mattress and pillow (i.e., as associates having the place of honor in his majlis). He was pleased that they came to him, and authorised their presence as much as he could. He used to say, "Be generous to noble people who come to you, let people who believe continue in their faith" and he entrusted them with responsibility according to their

degree of faith. Whoever has read any books about the life of the Prophet will know that what we say is concerned with only a few of his good qualities, for [the Qur'an] says, "A prophet has come to you from among yourselves, and what you have gained is dear to Him, and who cares for the Believers, a person who is compassionate and forgiving."

And if they turn away, say, "God is sufficient to me: there is no God but Him. I depend on Him, for He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne." (B7v, A5v)

CHAPTER 5

THE IMPACT OF THE FULANI JIHAD ON INTERSTATE RELATIONS IN THE CENTRAL SUDAN KATSINA EMIRATE: A CASE STUDY

Richard W. Hull

At the opening of the nineteenth century, the Sultanate of Katsina was an independent, thriving state controlled by a Hausa aristocracy. Although the state was founded in ca. 1250, its independence came later and gradually. In 1554 it threw off the yoke of the crumbling Songhay Empire; and after 1784 it was strong enough to resist payment of a coronation tax and other levies demanded by the kingdom of Bornu.¹ Moreover, the centuries-long military struggle with its commercial rival, Kano, had if only temporarily perhaps, come to a halt. In 1801, the Hausa of Katsina defeated their second most important commercial competitor, the Hausa Sultanate of Gobir, which lay to the northwest.² Katsina was at peace, and had become a magnet attracting merchants and pastoralists from throughout Hausaland and Bornu. Indeed, as early as 1740 the kingdom had become well known for its peaceful, prosperous conditions and in that year a large element of the wealthy Arab trading community in Kano abandoned its stalls and moved to the secure and bustling markets of Katsina city.³ Furthermore, many nomadic Fulani who had passed through Katsina in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century in their eastward search for pastures for their cattle were returning to these now peaceful environs and settling among their already established Fulani cousins.

Clearly, in 1801 it would not have been unreasonable to predict that the nineteenth century would witness the continued rapid growth of an independent Katsina and its rise to economic pre-eminence in the Central Sudan. Yet this prophecy was to be denied. Indeed, within six years an event was to occur which would result in a total power transferral to another (minority) ethnic group, place the kingdom under the sovereignty of a foreign power, and plunge it into nearly a century of warfare and economic stagnation. This paper shall attempt to explain how Katsina fell into such a condition--and remained in that state--by examining the internal politics of the kingdom and its interaction with its newly-created neighbors, Sokoto and Maradi. History has taught us not to judge the strength of a society or polity solely by its economic stability and growth.

1. Thomas Hodgkin, Nigerian Perspectives (London, 1960), 29; S. J. Hogben and A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, The Emirates of Northern Nigeria (London, 1966), 162-163.
2. H. A. S. Johnston, The Fulani Empire of Sokoto (London, 1967), 60; Documents Scientifiques de la Mission Tilho (1906-1909) (Paris, 1911), 460.
3. W. F. Gowers, Gazetteer of Kano Province (London, 1921), 18.

Katsina's populace may have been relatively wealthy at the turn of the century, but it was suffering from a grave political and spiritual malaise. Since the mid-seventeenth century the kingdom had been advancing northward and engulfed the pagans around Maradi and Tessaawa in present-day Niger Republic. These peoples, however, were never completely assimilated into the mainstream of Katsina society. Nor were the Fulani, who had been given a large measure of political autonomy within their own areas of settlement but were denied political representation in the central government. Such a situation was frustrating to this ethnic minority for it was forced to pay certain taxes uncalled for in the Muslim Qur'an yet had no voice in apportionment or expenditure. The recent pastoral Fulani migrants were especially oppressed for they were heavily taxed on their cattle and did not enjoy the tax exemptions or concessions granted to some of their cousins who had arrived earlier and had ingratiated themselves (and intermarried) with the Hausa elites.

In addition, many Fulani had abandoned their pastoral ways and had established their own towns or had migrated into the towns inhabited and governed by Hausa chiefs. In the latter communities, these settled or "town" Fulani enjoyed few political rights. This situation did not present serious problems under stable political conditions. But between 1800 and 1806 Hausa Katsina was weakened by a succession of five kings.⁴ None of them were in office long enough to establish a strong administration. Hausa central authority was therefore highly vulnerable.

As in any polity, prosperity often leads to less emphasis on the faith (in this case Islam) and more attention to temporal and economic affairs. Increasingly, there was the argument, especially among young Fulani students reared in the theologically-oriented Qur'anic schools, that Katsina, like its Hausa neighbors, was becoming too materialistic, too syncretic. The Sultanate was ripe for reform or revolution.

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It was in 1804 that the prominent Fulani scholar from Gobir, 'Uthman B. Muhammad Fodiye, declared a Jihad or Holy War against the Hausa rulers of that kingdom. Within a few years, this Jihad would sweep most of the Hausa monarchs off their thrones and lead to the ultimate establishment of the vast Central Sudanic Fulani Empire of Sokoto. The conquest of Katsina was crucial to the establishment of the Caliphate (or Empire) of Sokoto, for at the opening of the nineteenth century Katsina was, commercially, one of the most important polities in Hausaland and was a vital entrepot in the north-south trade between North Africa and the forest states of southern Nigeria. Furthermore, it was an immediate neighbor to the center of Fulani power, located at Sokoto.

Not surprisingly, Shaikh 'Uthman chose as his lieutenants in Katsina men from three strategic areas of that Sultanate. Flags (the symbol of leadership in the Jihad) were bestowed upon these three youthful revolutionaries, and they were instructed (along with other flagbearers) to fight for Islam in their respective states. The

4. See Documents Scientifiques, 460.

three Katsina jihadi were not pure Fulani but were members of quasi-Fulani families of mixed ethnic complexion. Umaru Dunyawa was a leading figure among the Sullubawa, a large group of pastoralists in the northwestern marches. Umaru Dallaji, a former student of the Shaikh, counted himself with a poor, though influential, clan of scholar/pastoralists in the south-central region. The third major flagbearer was Na Alhaji, the son of a pious Muslim scholar from the central core of the kingdom. Na Alhaji's family, though Fulani, had recently migrated from Bornu. Many members of these families or clans were not urbanized but rather lived on the rural fringes of Hausa towns. Generally speaking, however, they tended to act as a demographic wedge between the two concentrations of Hausa power and population: the north and the deep south.⁵

Among the three major flagbearers, Umaru Dallaji emerged as the most favored by the authorities in Sokoto. This was because of his earlier participation in the Jihad in Gobir and his close friendship with the Shaikh's son, Belo.

The first months of the Jihad in Katsina were disappointing. Umaru Dunyawa expected to easily subdue the local Hausa chiefs in the northwestern marches of the kingdom. However, he encountered strong opposition not only from the Hausa but from his own people, who had grown rich under the Hausa authorities and were at first unwilling to lend support for fear a political upheaval would upset the economic status quo. Indeed, it was only after Shaikh 'Uthman offered them the lands of pagan peasants in the far north that they agreed to give at least their tacit support. Dunyawa was then able to garner enough strength to wrest control of Hausa territory from the suburbs of the capital, Katsina city, northward to the town of Maradi.⁶ Shaikh 'Uthman's success in winning the support of Dunyawa and his Sullubawa was highly fortuitous. The conflict in the north forced the Hausa to fight a two-front battle because Dallaji and Na Alhaji were busy making trouble in the south. Furthermore, the northern Fulani campaign effectively isolated the Hausa from their potential allies in Gobir. Similarly, another Fulani reformist had tied up the Hausa kings of Katsina and Daura in the northeast and therefore prevented a coalition between them and the Hausa monarch of Kano.

Meanwhile, in the central heartland of Katsina Na Alhaji had established a string of military ribats or strongholds. But the Hausa king cleverly neutralized this jihadi as a rival by enticing him with the hand of his daughter in marriage. Through her, the king succeeded in presenting the becalmed jihadi with a poisoned gown which ultimately brought about his death.⁷

5. For backgrounds see "Yandaka History," SNP 7/10, 1778-1909, Nigerian Archives, Kaduna Branch (NAK); "Jibiya District Notes," Katprof/1, acc. no. 3, n.d., NAK; D. C. Fletcher, "Re-Assessment of Yandaka District," Katprof/1, HIS/13, 1928, NAK, 6-7; H. R. Palmer, "History of Katsina," Journal of the African Society, XXVI, 103 (April 1927), 225.
6. See H. R. Palmer, "Native Chiefs Confidential Reports," 22 November 1921, Katsina Provincial Office, Katsina City (KPO); W. B. Nicholas, "Kaita Assessment Report," Katprof/1, HIS/26, 1948, NAK, 49.
7. "Assessment Report - Yandaka District," HASS 1898, 1909, NAK, 17-19.

Na Alhaji's untimely death was then used by Dallaji, who had already won stunning victories in the south, as a pretext to launch a major offensive against the treacherous Hausa king who resided at Katsina city. In early 1807, the Fulani and Hausa clashed on a broad, flat plain not far from the city gates. Through the shrewd diplomacy of Shaikh 'Uthman, the Fulani were able to enlist the support of the Sultan of Air from the northern desert town of Agadez and the commander of the armies of the nearby kingdom of Kaura Namoda. After fierce fighting, the beleaguered Hausa monarch was slain, and his lieutenants fled to the walled confines of the capital where they hastily appointed a successor. Eventually, the city itself was besieged and Hausa rulers were driven northward, beyond the frontiers of their vanquished kingdom.⁸

Now that Hausa central control had been smashed, the jihadis sought to bring the Hausa urban strongholds in the deep south under their hegemony. Already, the Fulani had conquered much of the surrounding countryside. The task now was to besiege each community and to starve it into submission. The four major jihadis (Dallaji had urged the appointment of a fourth, Na Banye) and their armies encountered stiff resistance. It was therefore necessary for Shaikh 'Uthman to grant some additional flags to local Fulani chiefs in order to win their active support. These chiefs, like the original jihadis, were allowed to retain the lands they conquered and to assume the ancient official titles of their Hausa predecessors.

This added support, while extremely helpful, did not bring about the total conquest of the south. Indeed, in the hilly and rocky country of the southwest, where there were located a number of Hausa intellectual communities of great antiquity, the Fulani were unable to evict the ruling elites. The Fulani also had difficulty controlling the territory along the kingdom's northern frontier. Umaru Duniyawa had appointed a governor to the town of Maradi, but his administration was oppressive and he was assassinated by the local populace in 1819. The Fulani authorities at Sokoto could do little to prevent this calamity for the Shaikh, ill for several years, had died in 1817. His son and successor, Belo, was fully engaged in the consolidation of his own power within the Caliphate itself. Katsina, now a self-governing Emirate within the Caliphate, also had severe internal problems. Maradi was therefore able to declare its independence from Duniyawa and to call upon the former Hausa rulers of Katsina to establish a Katsina government in exile. They consented, and henceforth successive rulers of Maradi called themselves "the King of Katsina in Maradi."⁹ Upon taking office they vowed to continue the struggle for the liberation of Katsina from the Fulani usurpers. The major goal of Maradi diplomacy would be the reassertion of Hausa authority in Katsina. Thus, for the next eighty years the Hausa of Maradi waged intermittent war upon the Fulani to the south; wars which brought misery to both states and resulted in mutual economic, social and demographic dislocation.

8. See Anon., "The History of Umaru Dallaji and Consequent History of the Kings of Katsina," Muhammad Bello Kagara, trans. (unpublished paper, personal library of Muhammad Bello Kagara, 1952).
9. Yves Urvoy, Histoire des Populations du Soudan Central (Paris, 1936), 281; Dixon Denham, Hugh Clapperton, and Dr. Oudney, Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the Years 1822, 1823, and 1824 (London, 1826), 253-254; Durbin Katsina Ibrahim and Magajin Rogo, Maradi, 14 August 1966.

It was not long before this miniscule Sultanate of Maradi expanded and engulfed the territories of Tessawa and Gazawa, which were situated to the east of them. Eventually, Maradi's conquests deprived Katsina of a considerable portion of its northwestern frontier, a vital military buffer zone.

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By 1817, the Jihad of Shaikh 'Uthman had resulted in the establishment of a vast Fulani empire in Northern Nigeria. With the exception of Bornu, parts of Kebbi and Gobir, the hill areas of the Middle Belt, and the pockets mentioned above, the Fulani had overthrown the traditional Hausa monarchies. Before examining the impact of the Jihad on relations between Katsina, Sokoto and Maradi, let us probe more deeply into the Jihad itself. First of all, it must be emphasized that the early jihadi, for the most part, were not members of the old Katsina Fulani establishment. Rather, they were relative newcomers and were only part Fulani, with strains of Arab, Bare-Bari, Mande or even Hausa ancestry. It is equally significant that not all Fulani favored the Jihad: in fact the Ruma Fulani violently resisted it and some Sullubawa only gave the jihadi their half-hearted support.¹⁰ Unlike the established, older Fulani families of clans, the newer immigrants had not acquired a sense of loyalty to the Hausa monarchs nor did they have a strong desire to follow the authority of the existing local Fulani aristocrats. Furthermore, arriving later, they had to compete with Hausa agriculturalists for the dwindling reserve of fertile lands. These proud Fulani pastoralists despised peasant society, believing it to be inferior to their own.¹¹ The Jihad in Katsina may therefore be seen, in part, as a struggle between quasi-Fulani rural pastoralists and sedentary Hausa agriculturalists. After that struggle had been won by the former, it became a conflict between the rural Fulani (with some allies in the towns) and the urbanized Hausa elites.

We do not know the motives of the Katsina jihadi, because to date we have found no manuscripts written by them. Therefore only tentative conclusions may be drawn. From oral testimonies, it would seem that the Jihad was fought largely by Fulani (undoubtedly with the neutrality or support of some Hausa) and that their primary motive was political--the overthrow of Hausa rule at every level of government. However, the clash between the rich landed Fulani establishment, and their poorer, though perhaps more politically ambitious cousins, indicates that there was a degree of class rivalry in addition to the competition between Hausa and Fulani tribes. Fulani newcomers, some of them nouveau riche, undoubtedly wanted political status commensurate with their roles as advisers and teachers; and it is likely that the rural Fulani poor sought more grazing land and a more equitable tax system.¹²

What were the economic results of the Jihad? Were the grievances of the cattle Fulani ameliorated? The answers appear to be negative. The cattle tax that Shaikh 'Uthman preached

10. Anon., "Umaru Dallaji"; S. J. Hogben, "Ruma District: Census and Report," HASS/1166, 11 November 1927, NAK.
11. Murray Last, The Sokoto Caliphate (New York, 1967), lxxix.
12. See H. R. Palmer, "Katsina Division - Report on Taxation," HASS/1289, December 1908, KFO, 31.

against was restored; and in the course of the nineteenth century the incidence of indirect taxation increased. Moreover, it has been noted that the Jihad was followed by nearly nine decades of warfare between Maradi and Katsina. The western locus of commerce shifted away from the capital in an easterly direction and the major caravan routes soon intersected nearly twenty miles east of the city gates. The western portions of the kingdom became depopulated as a result of incessant Hausa raids from Maradi, and the center of agricultural activity drifted toward the Galadima's fief in the southeast.¹³

Socially, the Jihad did not result in any lasting animosity between the Hausa intellectuals and the Fulani. The majority of Hausa scholars chose not to follow their kin into exile, and for them life continued much as before. However, many Hausa scholars in the southwestern town of Kogo did not adhere to the Shaikh's reformist ideas and were forced into exile. As a result, that area's ancient reputation as a great Central Sudanic center for Islamic learning was lost.¹⁴

For the Fulani jihadi, the Holy War was a great success for they were now in control of the former Hausa fiefs and were therefore in possession of great wealth and influence. In reality, a new class had emerged, even though it was looked down upon socially by some of the older pre-jihadic Fulani elites. In the case of the Hausa aristocracy, the Jihad had been a total disaster. In nearly every instance, they lost political control and were driven into exile. The Hausa therefore lost political representation in Katsina. This was unfortunate, for under the ancient regime the Fulani, even though the Hausa-dominated towns, were at least governed locally by their Hausa-dominated towns, they were at least governed locally by their own people in the major areas of Fulani settlement. After the Jihad, the Hausa were well treated but they were denied, in most cases, direct participation in government.

In the judicial realm, the Jihad led to some positive and beneficial reforms. Katsina was blessed during the nineteenth century by a succession of outstanding Fulani justices who adhered to the Maliki code of Muslim law. These men, all from the same Fulani family, held the Muslim juridical title of Alkali. After the Jihad, Sokoto endowed Katsina's Alkali with a private estate which provided a source of revenue for both him and his court. The concession was significant for it enabled the Alkali to be independent, financially, of Katsina's monarch and other potential pressure groups. In addition, the chief Alkali was a life appointment and the king could not depose him without permission from Sokoto. Thus there was less compulsion for the Alkali to toe the line of the executive authorities. These reforms were to make the judiciary fairly independent of the executive branch of government. By the same token, the chief justice (i.e., Alkali) was expected to operate entirely within the judicial realm and was not to make political decisions. In extreme cases, appeals could be made from the chief Alkali's court to the king and ultimately to the Shaikh (and his successors) in Sokoto.

13. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, 120-122.

14. Malam Urwatu, Katsina, 23 July 1966.

Unquestionably, the most important changes that occurred due to the Jihad were political in nature. In the Hausa period, Katsina's monarch ruled supreme and was responsible to no one. During the Jihad, however, the Fulani Katsina flagbearers received their commissions from Shaikh 'Uthman and therefore were responsible to him. The Shaikh established his base at Sokoto and through his flagbearing lieutenants was able to amalgamate the formerly independent Hausa kingdoms into a mighty and expansive Fulani empire. He assumed the title of Sarkin Musulmi which literally means "king of the Muslims," and is the Hausa equivalent of the ancient Arabic Muslim designation "amir al-muminin" (Commander of the Faithful).

The title was of dual significance, for the Sarkin Musulmi was both political and spiritual overlord of the kingdoms which made up his immense empire. After the Shaikh's death, successive rulers of the empire assumed this title. Katsina's monarchs, like those in other kingdoms comprising the Sokoto Empire, recognized the superiority of the Sarkin Musulmi and were expected to send gifts to him from time to time as a token of their respect and allegiance. Within a few decades, this tribute evolved into an annual payment of a portion of Katsina's revenue. The Sarkin Musulmi also possessed the privilege of deposing and confirming the appointments of not only the ruler of Katsina but the major hereditary nobles and kingmakers as well.¹⁵

Since it would have been impossible for the Sarkin Musulmi to oversee the administration of every dependent kingdom, he appointed a representative to each. The Galadima of Sokoto, a member of the royal court, was his representative to the court of the king of Katsina. The choice was wise, for the Galadima's family were originally Katsinawa Fulani from Gobir. This official rarely visited Katsina, and delegated responsibilities to his eldest son, who carried the title of Dan Maliki. The latter spent several months each year in Katsina and saw to it that Sokoto's share of the revenue was collected and safely transferred to the treasury of the Sarkin Musulmi.¹⁶ It is significant that the Vizier of Sokoto, an official only second in rank to the Sarkin Musulmi, did not deal directly with emirates or kingdoms outside his portfolio. Katsina was one of those states.¹⁷

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By 1807 the Hausa power structure in the city of Katsina had been destroyed, and within the next two years the Fulani assumed control over most of the major fiefdoms in the kingdom. To soften the blow of this transfer of power, and for political convenience, the Fulani usurpers adopted the old Hausa system of government with its plethora of titles, fiefs, and court regalia. The revolutionaries had in fact now become the establishment. Yet a subtle power struggle within the Fulani hierarchy at Katsina began to develop. When the capital was taken from the Hausa, Dunyawa and the late Na Alhaji's son occupied the quarters of the city they had conquered, while Umaru Dallaji took control of the palace and the central market

15. Ibid., 24 July 1966; Muhammad Bello Kagara, Katsina, 4 July 1966.

16. Malam Guda, Katsina, 6 July 1966.

17. Last, Sokoto, 204.

area. The capital was then partitioned into three parts, corresponding to the areas controlled by the three jihadi. These men also held major former Hausa fiefs in the surrounding countryside.¹⁸

The tripartite division of Katsina had a debilitating effect. Administrative problems could not be expeditiously handled, and there was no unified command in the army. Consequently, the kingdom was highly vulnerable to the Hausa menace and was largely responsible for the reassertion of Hausa rule in Maradi. Sarkin Musulmi Belo, son and successor to Shaikh 'Uthman, feared that if the triumvirate continued it would eventually lead to civil war and a further deterioration of central authority. Consequently, in 1812 he abolished the arrangement and officially declared Umaru Dallaji the ruling monarch. Rather than assigning him the ancient Hausa non-Islamic title of "sarki" (snake killer) he installed him in office as "Emir," which was a Muslim designation of Middle Eastern origin. The kingdom in turn was henceforth referred to as an "Emirate."¹⁹

Belo, astute diplomat that he was, did not forget the achievements of the other jihadi. Indeed, each received an aristocratic title and was assured that he and his successors would forever be among the kingmakers of Katsina and that he would be installed and deposed not by the Emir but by the Sarkin Musulmi through his personal representative, the Galadiman Sokoto. Moreover, they were extended the privilege of control over revenue collection in their fiefs, and their tax bill was henceforth stated separately from that of the Emir.

This arrangement was undoubtedly an improvement over the anarchic triumvirate system of government. However, it possessed some weaknesses. First of all, the Emir was not to be an absolute ruler as were his Hausa predecessors, but rather primus inter pares. Secondly, he was required to rule within the context of a highly decentralized confederation of fiefdoms, some of which by virtue of their special connection with the Sarkin Musulmi in Sokoto were almost completely independent of Katsina central authority.

From Sokoto's standpoint, the new arrangement was undoubtedly welcomed. It left the Emir in a weak enough position to prevent him from challenging the hegemony of the Sarkin Musulmi; and the special relationship worked out with the major fiefholders gave the Sarkin Musulmi a degree of control over administration in the Emirate. At the same time, the appointment of a Kaura (one of the flagbearers) as supreme war chief tended to unify the military command and thus strengthen Katsina's hand vis-à-vis their opponents in Maradi.

Emir Dallaji did not oppose the scheme--perhaps because of his loyalty and deep friendship for the Sarkin Musulmi and his son and undoubtedly because of his pleasure over being entrusted with the responsibility of establishing a Fulani ruling dynasty. This, however, was not the case with his descendants and successors. Throughout the nineteenth century Katsina's monarchs sought ways to reassert the autonomy of the king.

18. Anon., "Umaru Dallaji"; "Assessment Report."

19. Last, Sokoto, 53; Malam Urwatu, Katsina, 9 July 1966.

When Umaru Dallaji died in 1835, he was succeeded by his second son, Sidiku.²⁰ This was not an auspicious moment for a change in leadership. In the following year, at the battle of Gawakuke in Gobir, a combination of Tuareg, Gobir and Maradi forces was routed and the Hausa sultan of the last state was killed.²¹ Thus, with Hausa expansion into Gobir blocked, Maradi turned its attention to Katsina in the south. According to oral tradition, Sidiku was appointed over his elder brother, Bello, because of his reputation for learning and piety. The appointment naturally triggered rivalries within the ruling family, and the Hausa exiles in Maradi took advantage of this by launching an invasion.²² The fief of the Sarkin Sullubawa had been dangerously unstable since its northern half was reconquered by the Maradi forces in the years after 1819. Umaru Dallaji had been able to give Duniyawa enough support to prevent the entire Sullubawa fief from falling under Hausa control, but Duniyawa's successor foolishly raised taxes and appointed irresponsible collectors. The Maradi king profited from the seething discontent within the fief by liberating it from Fulani rule. It was this initial success, coupled with the struggles among Dallaji's sons and relatives, that spurred the Maradi Hausa to launch an invasion into the heart of Katsina. Indeed, the time was ripe for the powerful and adroit diplomat, Sarkin Musulmi Belo, had died in 1837. His son and successor, Ali, was young and initially encountered difficulty in working with the older statesmen who had served under the Shaikh and Belo since before the Jihad.²³

When Maradi began to infiltrate the Emirate, the Fulani of Ruma, who had earlier opposed the jihadi, declared their neutrality and allowed the Hausa guerrillas to use their territory as a corridor to the rest of the kingdom.²⁴ By 1843, the Maradi Hausa under Dan Mari had forged an alliance with a number of Katsina towns which were situated in the center of the Emirate and had also taken control of three large southern communities with sizeable Hausa populations. One of those communities, Karofi, was deep within Katsina territory and became the Hausa base of operations against the Fulani regime.²⁵ A feeling of insecurity developed among the peasants, whose crops were being stolen or destroyed by the invaders; local chiefs responded by constructing high protective walls around their villages. It is noteworthy that military campaigns in the Emirate were not led by the Sokoto authorities but were usually left to local initiative.

Again, as in the Jihad, Katsina appealed to its neighbors for assistance. The emirates of Daura, Borgu, Katagum, Misau, Gombe, Bauchi and Kano responded. The old Fulani tactic of controlling the surrounding countryside and starving the urban Hausa strongholds was re-employed. In time, the major Hausa base was forced to capitulate and its leader was executed. These events led to the rapid collapse of the invasion and a reassertion of Fulani control.²⁶

20. Hogben and Kirk-Greene, Emirates, 170.

21. Last, Sokoto, 71.

22. Hogben and Kirk-Greene, Emirates, 170.

23. Last, Sokoto, 81, 84.

24. F. de F. Daniel, "History of Katsina" (unpublished paper, KPO, 1927), 19.

25. Gowers, Gazetteer, 19; Fletcher, "Re-Assessment of Yandaka District," HIS/13, 1928, NAK.

26. Anon., "Umaru Dallaji"; "Yandaka History," 11.

The conflict itself enabled Katsina's warlord, the Kaura, to expand his own fief holdings. But more importantly, Emir Sidiku, at the conclusion of the war, sought to strengthen his own hand by turning his vengeance upon all those who had supported, tacitly or otherwise, the Maradi attack. Hausa communities in the west were destroyed; and Ruma, which had alternated its support depending on the changing fortunes of the Katsina regime, was similarly devastated. Formerly, Ruma had acted as a buffer state between Katsina and Maradi. Now its ruling family and the majority of its inhabitants were forced to flee before Sidiku's ravaging armies. The Emir's terrorist activities were a mistake, for Ruma became a wasteland and served as a permanent corridor for future Hausa irruptions into the Katsina, Zaria and Kano emirates.²⁷

Sidiku's terrorism and his obvious attempt to enhance his own power alarmed both Katsina and the Sarkin Musulmi. The latter, at the urging of Katsina's electoral college, deposed him in 1844 and chose his elder brother, Muhamman Bello, as successor.²⁸ Sarkin Musulmi Ali had wisely used his authority to remove an excessively ruthless and autocratic Emir. However, Sidiku now became a thorn in his side by assisting the Hausa of Tsibiri in campaigns against Sokoto and Gobir and by attempting, though futilely, to forge an alliance with the Hausa exiles in Maradi.

Bello (not to be confused with the late Sarkin Musulmi) realized that Katsina central authority would have to be strengthened in order to prevent a repetition of the disastrous events of the 1840's. However, his efforts to bolster the power of the office of Emir were peaceful and diplomatic. The titled fiefholders were henceforth required to spend a portion of each year at the capital under the watchful eye of the Emir and his court. Over the years, this residency requirement was extended to the point where the fiefholders rarely visited their constituencies and became in effect absentee landlords without direct political control over their fiefdoms. The responsibility for tax collection and general administrative supervision was now entrusted by them to their slaves who were given the title of jakada. This transfer of responsibility was highly significant for it resulted in a new class of government officials--a wealthy and powerful slave hierarchy without social status but with varying degrees of control over local administration. Furthermore, it led to the increasing urbanization and stabilization of the Fulani aristocracy.

Bello may have brought the Fulani hereditary aristocracy more tightly under his control, but it is doubtful if this led to any sweeping extension of his authority over the major fiefs. In fact, those fiefholders who received their titles directly from Sokoto, and who remitted their taxes to the Sarkin Musulmi, resisted Bello's attempt to force them to reside at the capital. Such kingmakers (and descendants of flagbearers) as the 'Yan Daka and Kaura continued to reside on their fiefs and to enjoy almost complete control over the internal administration of their lands. Thus, this special relationship with Sokoto enabled them to maintain a certain degree of independence and made it difficult for the Emir to encroach on their prerogatives.

27. "Ruma District Notes," HASS/6, 1927, NAK; Hogben and Kirk-Greene, Emirates, 171.

28. Ibid., 171.

Emir Bello sought to overcome the authority of the weaker landed aristocrats in several ways. First of all, he enlarged his palace staff, gave them titles, created new forms of taxation, and entrusted them with the responsibility of collecting those taxes. Consequently, there were two sets of tax collectors: those responsible directly to the Emir and those who were employed by the fief-holders. Secondly, a number of palace staff were given fiefs to govern and were made directly responsible to the Emir. Finally, Bello enhanced his own financial position (and hence his power) by making a few alterations in the tax scheme. Umaru Dallaji, when in office, had differentiated between Muslim and pagan Fulani. While the former were required to pay tax on corn, the latter were (as before the Jihad) subject to irregular levies. About 1850, Bello abolished all distinctions between the two classes because, it is said, the number of pagan Fulani had decreased.²⁹ Both were thereafter subject to the same forms of taxation. In 1804, Shaikh 'Uthman had preached against the cattle tax. Bello not only retained it but raised the rate significantly.

These changes profoundly affected the power structure in the Emirate and were achieved without an internal civil war or the destruction of any existing institutions. The difference was that now a new authority was superimposed on the old, and in some cases tended to submerge it. Bello had given the slaves a large measure of political control over local administration and tax collection and in so doing hoped to short-circuit the power of the hereditary aristocrats who had quite naturally tried to block any aggrandizement of the power of the office of Emir.

During Bello's reign, Katsina enjoyed relative peace and stability. However, the Jihad and subsequent wars with Maradi had taken their economic toll. We know this because in the 1850's Katsina was host to an astute European traveler, Dr. Heinrich Barth. Barth first came to Katsina in 1851 and returned two years later. He noted that the capital city had experienced a period of decline and that although it was surrounded by a wall approximately 13 miles in circumference, its inhabitants numbered no more than about seven or eight thousand. Barth estimated that the city at one time had a population of at least 100,000 but that it had declined after the Fulani Jihad.³⁰ He was told that the principal foreign merchants had migrated to Kano and concluded his study with the prediction that:

... unless either the Fulbe [Fulani] succeed in crushing entirely the independent provinces to the north and north-west, or until the Goverawa and Mariadawa [*sic*], whose king still bears the title of serki-n-Katsena [*sic*], reconquer this town, it will continue to decline and become more desolate every year.³¹

Barth's statement strongly supports the contention that the Jihad and

29. "Kano Province Half Yearly Report Ending June 30, 1909," SNP 10/6, 3835, NAK, 32; also, Malam Guda, Katsina, 8 July 1966.

30. Henry Barth, Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa (London, 1965), I, 476.

31. Ibid., 479.

the subsequent conflicts with Hausa Maradi seriously crippled the Emirate's economy and retarded further development. At the opening of the nineteenth century, on the eve of the Jihad, Katsina was emerging as one of the most prosperous trading centers in Hausaland. The best caravan track to the south was between Katsina and the bustling city of Bida, which lay on the edge of the massive forest zone. Furthermore, many of the important caravan routes to North Africa came down through northern Katsina, which was in Hausa-Maradi hands after the Jihad. Thus, economically, the Jihad and the subsequent failure to achieve a condition of peace between Katsina and Maradi was disastrous for that region of the Central Sudan. In human terms, the peasantry had the most to lose because it was they whose farms were left desolate and who had to take refuge in the walled cities where they became a landless proletariat.

* * * * *

After the defeat of the exiled Hausa in 1844, Sokoto increasingly carried the burden of war with Gobir and Maradi. Sokoto took the offensive, won impressive victories, but failed to take the Hausa strongholds in Tsibiri and Maradi.³² Nevertheless, with the pressure (or onus of war) off Katsina, Emir Bello could devote greater attention to long-overdue reforms. Diplomatic relations between Sokoto and Katsina under Sarkin Musulmi Aliyu (1842-1859) and Muhammad Bello (1844-1869) respectively, were far more cordial than during the short but stormy days of Sidiku.

Muhammad Bello ruled until his death in 1869; yet towards the end of his reign the wars with Maradi regained momentum.³³ Dan Baskore had succeeded to the Maradi throne in 1854 and undertook to unite his subjects behind him in a new bid for Katsina. This dynamic warrior and able administrator reasserted the traditional foundation of Maradi diplomacy--the reconquest of Katsina. To this end, he devoted nearly all his energies. Within a year he reorganized, expanded and equipped a large and highly disciplined army and used the desolate Fuma bush country as the main avenue for attacks upon the Fulani. On one occasion, he advanced as far as the gates of Katsina; and at an encounter at Kabakawa his troops came within yards of capturing the elderly Bello. In a later invasion, Dan Baskore penetrated deeply into southern Katsina and, like his predecessors, used a local community as a base for operations against towns in the neighboring emirate of Zaria. The Fulani of Katsina, under Bello, were at first unable to control these devastating invasions. But in 1868 a decisive victory was finally achieved. The story was told many years afterward by an eyewitness and was written down by a British District officer:

Dan Baskore set out with two thousand horses late in the dry season to attack Katsina. . . They reached Muduru in Durbi district, before their approach was known to Katsina. Durbi quickly gathered a force from his own men. . . Presumably they were trained to concentrate at short notice. However, the

32. M. G. Smith, "A Hausa Kingdom: Maradi under Dan Baskore, 1854-75," in Daryll Forde and P. M. Kaberry, eds., West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1965), 98.
33. Hogben and Kirk-Greene, Emirates, 183; Malam Urwatu, Katsina, 24 July 1966.

season was late and Danbaskore [sic] found no water for his cavalcade at Muduru. A boy was brought in, who had a calabash of water, when Durbi and his force came upon them, affecting a complete surprise. There was a great slaughter of men and horses, caught as they were with their backs to the lake. The water of Sabe lake is said to have run red with blood. Some five hundred men were slain. Those who escaped, passed by Allemi and Gafiya, and tried to reach Riga Lake. But Durbi had preceded them by a shorter route. His archers tied the geza shrub together across the paths to entangle the horses, and making full use of the cover afforded by the riverine forest, exacted a further heavy toll with their arrows. Danbaskore's horsemen were forced to withdraw unsuccessful. The same story was repeated at the Sauri lake. Eventually a dispirited Danbaskore reached Birnin Kuka with a handful of men. This was probably the last raid in force.³⁴

These accounts of the wars with Maradi are important because they reveal the continuing weakness of the Katsina regime. Most of the battles were defensive in nature. Katsina--despite its numerical superiority--was not united enough to prevent the Hausa exiles from probing deep within its frontiers. Perhaps the reason for Maradi's failure totally to conquer the Emirate lay with the problem of logistics. The supply lines from Maradi were too tenuous and their inability to win the countryside prevented them from living off the rural peasants.

For twenty-one years, until his death, Dan Baskore led eighty-three raids against Fulani Katsina, Zamfara, and Sokoto, including two unsuccessful sieges of Katsina city.³⁵ Under this energetic Sultan Maradi reached its peak of power and administrative development. While Katsina's Emir Bello had administratively and fiscally strengthened the Emirate to the degree that it prevented a future Hausa reconquest, Dan Baskore's work had made Maradi strong enough to withstand any attempt by the Fulani to conquer it. The tragedy, however, was that although both were adept at forging alliances with their own ethnic group in other states, neither made an effort to come to terms with one another. Indeed, peace between Katsina and Maradi was inconceivable. Successive emirs were bound by the families--and rival branches--to continue the "honorable war." An emir's or sultan's reputation, and ability as a leader, were assessed largely by his ability to prosecute the war successfully. Furthermore, their wealth--and hence ability to wage war--rested in large part on the amount of war booty they could extract from the vanquished. Too many citizens, especially the aristocrats, were profiting by these military raids which they conducted. It is therefore questionable whether either side would have preferred peace under the existing political conditions. No written evidence or oral testimonies suggest that either camp wished to convene a conference to discuss peace. Yet, through a complicated spy network both were kept well-informed of each other's activities. For the Hausa exiles in Maradi this was a war of honor. For the Fulani usurpers in Katsina it was a struggle for survival.

34. Nicholas, "Kaita," 51.

35. Smith, "Hausa Kingdom," 98; Documents Scientifiques, II, 463-464.

Dan Baskore's irruptions represented one of the last concerted massive attempts to reassert Hausa control over the Emirate. His death was followed by a series of monarchs lacking in prestige and the ability to consolidate their predecessor's political and territorial gains. Within a decade Maradi was torn by civil war, and its raids against Katsina were less frequent and effective.³⁶ In a sense this was fortunate for Katsina because for the next three and a half decades it too experienced intense rivalry within the ruling circles.

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For Katsina, the connection with its overlord, Sokoto, was a mixed blessing. Shaikh 'Uthman and his son and successor, Muhammad Belo, had imposed on the Emirate an effective system of checks and balances. The powers of the successive Katsina emirs were circumscribed not only by the ultimate authority, the Sarkin Musulmi, but through those aristocrats who received their commissions directly from Sokoto. This situation produced a condition of dependence and helped to ensure continuing loyalty and cordial relations between the two states. Successive emirs of Katsina also received their commissions of office from the Sarkin Musulmi, who lent legitimacy and strength to their position vis-à-vis certain titled local aristocrats. By the same token, however, those latter officials cherished their own connection, or special relationship, with Sokoto and used it as a shield against attempts by emirs to whittle away their authority and prerogatives. In other words, as long as the office of Sarkin Musulmi carried great weight, it was in the interest of the emir to curry the favor of Sokoto. As a result, the emirs of Katsina never attained the extensive position of authority enjoyed by the chiefs of some of the other emirates. Until the final decade of the nineteenth century they were little more than primus inter pares and they remained remarkably loyal to their Sokoto overlords. With constant threats to legitimacy emanating both from the Hausa exiles in Maradi and from rival branches within the Dallaji family itself, successive emirs used the Sokoto connection as a protective device.

The tragedy for Katsina, however, was that the original jihadi had failed to give the Hausa a role in the governance of the new regime. It would seem that once the Jihad had gained momentum, the Fulani wanted the total destruction of Hausa authority, regardless of whether a given Hausa chief happened to have professed Islam. Furthermore, by failing to win the unequivocal support of the Hausa peasantry (more especially the Hausa townfolk) and some of their overlords, the Fulani would have to cope with neutral or hostile elements within Katsina during the devastating post-jihadic Maradi irruptions. In addition, Shaikh Uthman had initially failed to exploit the historic Hausa commercial rivalry between Gobir and Katsina. Sultan Yunfa of Gobir and the Sultan of Katsina had been at odds with one another for several years prior to the Jihad. In fact, the Sultan of Katsina had tried at one point to forge an alliance with the Shaikh against the Gobir authorities, but for some unexplained reason was rebuffed. Thus, the great jihadic victory in Katsina was, in some respects, a hollow one. A sharing of power between Fulani and Hausa Muslims might, in the long term, have ensured peace, greater popular representation in government, and perhaps even unity between Katsina and Maradi.

36. M. Perie, "Cercle de Maradi Historique Complet Politique et Administratif des Origines à 1940" (unpublished manuscript, 1948), passim.

CHAPTER 6

THE COMMERCE OF HAUSALAND, 1780-1833

Lucie G. Colvin

Introduction

The Hausa people of Northern Nigeria and southern Niger Republic¹ have been famous as traders since the Europeans first heard of them in the sixteenth century. Yet we know little, if any, more of their indigenous commerce and commercial history today than was known in the middle of the nineteenth century after Heinrich Barth published the findings of his prodigious explorations.² Only isolated aspects of their commerce have attracted historians so far. The trans-Saharan trade in which the Hausa were involved has received recent attention,³

1. In this paper, following the current custom, "Hausa" will be used to refer to both Hausa proper and the assimilated Fulani who now rule the Hausa states. "Habe" will be used when only the Hausa proper are meant.

The central Hausa city-states were Kano, Katsina, Zaria, Gobir, Zamfara, and Daura. Hausa is also spoken in Yauri, Bussa, Zaberma or Zerma, Gurma, Borgu, Nupe, and Gwari. These sometimes are considered "bastard" Hausa states. After the Fulani jihād, Sokoto was the capital of the empire which included most of the old central states, and Gwandu, the capital of the western empire embracing several of the "bastard" states.

Spelling of personal and place names will be according to modern usage, except in quotations or direct references. There the author's spelling is retained. Hausa words are spelled according to the rules adopted by the Hausa Committee, that is, double consonants appear, but long vowels and tonal patterns do not. Hausa terms are not underlined after their first occurrence. Arabic words are transliterated using the rules of Farhat J. Ziadeh and R. Bayly Winder in An Introduction to Modern Arabic (Princeton, 1957). Arabic words which have been borrowed into Hausa may be spelled in the Hausa fashion where this is appropriate, e.g., Hausa "shehu" for Arabic "sheikh."

2. Heinrich Barth, Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa (London, 1857-1858).
3. A. Adu Boahen, Britain, the Sahara and the Western Sudan, 1788-1861 (Oxford, 1964); A. Adu Boahen, "The Caravan Trade in the Nineteenth Century," Journal of African History [JAH], III, 2 (1962), 349-359; C. W. Newbury, "North African and Western Sudan Trade in the Nineteenth Century: A Re-evaluation," JAH, VII, 2 (1966), 233-246.

as have the various currencies which they used.⁴ M. G. Smith has published excellent anthropological studies of the Hausa economics,⁵ but he has not been concerned with historical depth. The purpose of this paper is to begin a comprehensive history of Hausa commerce, that is, to trace the movement of goods through Hausaland in all directions and to provide a chronological perspective.⁶ This approach is intended to bridge the present scholarly gap between generalizations about commerce spanning several centuries on the one hand, and, on the other, detailed information submerged in accounts essentially concerned with something else, for example, explorers' journals and local chronicles.

Chronologically, this paper begins not at the beginning of the Hausa's rise to commercial preeminence in the sixteenth century, but near the end of the eighteenth century, about the middle of their period of prosperity. This ambiguity is forced on the topic by the lack of sources for the later sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth centuries. Only in the last quarter of the eighteenth century did the Europeans begin soliciting detailed reports of the trade of the interior of West Africa. Given these contemporary accounts, the chronicles and the work of modern anthropologists can be very useful, but without them it is very difficult to reconstruct commercial history reliably. Hence it was found best to begin when the sources do, at the end of the eighteenth century. The paper ends with the journey of Richard and John Lander down the Niger in 1832-1834, also a point dictated at least partially by the sources. After this time we have no more eyewitness accounts of Hausaland until the journey of Heinrich Barth in 1854, and his account properly belongs to the history of the Sokoto empire, not to the period of transition with which I am concerned.

The paper thus spans a period of fifty years, the time of the last Habe emirs, or *sarakuna* (sing. *sarki*) as the Hausa call them, and the period of the Fulani jihad under Uthman dan Fodio. In Europe it was a period of great scientific, geographical, and commercial interest in Africa -- the era of the first explorers. The flow of information, the fruit of this interest, was interrupted only by the turmoil of the Napoleonic Wars. For England, the latter half of the period saw the beginnings of her efforts to end the slave trade, a time when she hoped greatly that diplomacy in the interior of Africa would dry up the sources of the trade.

The first European report on the Hausa kingdoms from North Africa was solicited by a German named Niebuhr in 1772. In 1785 another German, A. von Einseidel, made a second brief reference to the

4. A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, "The Major Currencies in Nigerian History," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, II, 1 (December 1960); M. Hiskett, "Materials Relating to the Cowry Currency of the Western Sudan," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies [BSOAS], XXIX, 1-2 (1966), 122-142, 339-366.
5. M. G. Smith, The Economy of the Hausa Communities of Zaria (London, 1955); M. G. Smith, "Historical and Cultural Conditions of Political Corruption among the Hausa," Comparative Studies in Society and History, VI (1963-1964), 164-194; M. G. Smith, "Social and Economic Change among Selected Native Communities in Northern Nigeria" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1951).
6. In this paper, commerce is considered to mean interstate trade only. Purely domestic trade is excluded for lack of sources.

Tripoli-Hausa trade. The Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa began collecting information about the commerce of the Sudan belt in 1788.⁷ They obtained relatively extensive information on Hausa trade from four sources between then and 1800: their agents, Lucas in Tripoli Regency (1788-1790), Frederic Horneman in Cairo and Fezzan (1797-1800), and two Moroccan merchants resident in London. Also encompassed in this period were Mungo Park's first and second journeys on the upper Niger, 1795 and 1805; Bowdich's and Dupuis' missions to Ashanti, 1817 and 1820 respectively; Clapperton's two missions to Hausaland, 1823-1824 and 1826-1827; Caillie's journey to Timbuktu in 1825 and Laing's abortive expedition to Hausaland in the same year; and finally the Lander brothers' voyage from Hausaland to the Niger delta in 1832-1834.

The Nature of Trade

A general picture of the character of trade and the details of commercial organization in Hausaland is a necessary beginning for a study of this kind. Western economic concepts and assumptions are not appropriate, and neither are most generalizations about "primitive" commerce. The best conceptual tools for analyzing Hausa commerce during the period under consideration are probably those put forth by Karl Polanyi.⁸ Those which are applicable are noted below.

The customs, regulations, and functions of commerce have been reconstructed by correlating sources dating from the early nineteenth century with subsequent, more detailed and analytical descriptions. Using this method, one can with some certainty remove anachronisms from the later pictures. It is very difficult, however, to resurrect the details of customs which have been abandoned, as they sink from memory and do not appear in subsequent studies. This particularly corrupts our image of pre-jihad Hausaland, since the jihadists either feigned or actually were remarkably ignorant of the Habe milieu in which they operated.⁹ Many, including Uthman's ancestors, were

7. In this paper, "Sudan" refers to the belt of savannah and park lands stretching across Africa between the Sahara and the rain forests. To Arabs involved in the medieval trans-Saharan trade it merely meant "the land of the blacks." Horneman reports that at the end of the eighteenth century it was usually used to denote only Hausaland. See E. W. Bovill, ed., Missions to the Niger, I (Cambridge, 1962), 115. Denham and Clapperton used it in this meaning, and also loosely to denote everything west of Bornu.
8. Karl Polanyi, Conrad Arensberg, and Harry Pearson, eds., Trade and Markets in Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory (Glencoe, Ill., 1957), especially Ch. 13, "The Economy as an Instituted Process."
9. For example, the map of Hausaland given Clapperton by Bellow represented far fewer places than were known to most long-distance traders. The latter were mainly Habe.

recent immigrants to the area,¹⁰ and their contempt for the inhabitants prevented them from learning much about local customs.

This colors virtually all travelers' reports and subsequent studies in some form or another. Several Habe states were recreated in exile, presumably in much the same form in which they existed before the jihad, and they constitute a type of control group against which to measure Fulani changes. However, any change in these re-located states which has passed from memory cannot be accounted for. Thus this study cannot fully reconstruct whatever was unique in the Habe period, and not adopted by the Fulani conquerors. Fortunately, this affects only a few questions, as there seems to have been a large degree of continuity between the original Habe society and Fulani rule as it later evolved.

Several general aspects of trade are characteristic of both the Fulani and the Habe periods of Hausa history. The first is that commerce involving the Hausa states was essentially discontinuous. That is to say, it was made up of a series of individual ventures planned for the circumstances of the moment.¹¹ The participants were professional long-distance traders who were able to go wherever they knew market conditions to be favorable. There were trails connecting nearly all of the Saharan oases and sudanese states with one another, laterally as well as north and south. Thus what is usually called a trade "route" is simply the most commonly used itinerary for certain traders and caravans. When political or economic conditions demanded it, these itineraries could be changed even while a caravan was en route. This meant on the one hand that the fortunes of a market could change very rapidly in either direction.

On the other hand, there were a number of factors conducive to stability and regularity. Established commercial contacts, credit facilities, and living arrangements made traders prefer a regular route. Moreover, the governments of the various Hausa states, the Fezzan, Bornu, and Ashanti were themselves deeply involved in trade.¹² This made long-term diplomatic relations and commercial intercourse mutually reinforcing. Even when states were at enmity with one another, they did not necessarily stop all foreign merchants from passing between them. To cut the routes entirely might hurt them as much as it did their enemy. The geographical placement of sources of supply and demand, the conditions of travel and transport, and health

10. Dixon Denham, Hugh Clapperton, and Dr. Oudney, Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the Years 1822, 1823, and 1824 (2nd ed., London, 1826), Denham 159. This edition's pagination is consecutive within each author's section; thus the references here and following will indicate the specific author as well as pages. See also Thomas Hodgkin, ed., Nigerian Perspectives (London, 1960), 188-189.
11. Polanyi, Trade and Markets, 260, has cited this as a characteristic of nonwestern trade in general.
12. M. G. Smith, personal communication, April 1967; Proceedings of the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa, I (London, 1791), 105; Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Denham 329, Clapperton 43; Casely Hayford, Gold Coast Native Institutions (London, 1903), for the Ashanti state trading organization.

considerations also favored some market sites above others. This at least limited the range of possible areas to which a trader might choose to go.

The second major characteristic of Hausa trade is that it was under the firm control of the government. Each state regulated where markets could be established, how they could operate, who could trade and where they could go, what merchandise could be sold and the prices which could be asked for it. In addition to this the state itself, as the largest commercial interest, naturally exercised powerful influence on trade. Because of this interest, the state was concerned not only with regulating commerce in the negative sense, but also with promoting trade. This required both sound domestic policy and active foreign policy. The merchant was treated more or less as an honored guest when the reigning sarki was interested in trade: he was protected from theft and deception, his goods were restored to his heirs if he died, and all of his traveling needs were catered to. Foreign policy involved establishing good relations with states which could provide the goods in which the Hausa nobility was interested.

Commerce and the State

To understand this relationship between commerce and government as it actually functioned requires some acquaintance with the structure of Hausa states. Hausa society was and is hierarchical, built on the basic personal client-lord relationship. A great man typically has as clients a number of men who are totally dependent on him and work as his agents or servants, as well as some who are of independent means but consult with him on political questions.¹³

When clientship obtains between two economically independent persons, the relationship can best be regarded as a formalized friendship between socially unequal persons. The inferior greets his lord regularly in person and bearing gifts (Hausa: gaisuwa -- greeting, or gifts of greeting), reports on any events of concern to his lord, seeks advice and personal favors in political dealings, and, upon request, performs favors in his competence.¹⁴

The relationship extends both upward and downward on the social scale, as many men were both lords and clients. However, as client one might have only one lord, whereas as lord one might have many clients.¹⁵ Clientship was an essentially personal relationship, but customarily it was hereditary and sometimes it was attached directly to a political office, rather than to its holder.¹⁶

There were several conditions of men which affected status independently of this structure. There were slaves, economically

13. M. G. Smith, "The Hausa of Northern Nigeria," in James L. Gibbs, Jr., ed., Peoples of Africa (New York, 1965), 134.

14. Ibid., 134-135.

15. Smith, "Hausa," 135.

16. Ibid., 135.

dependent clients, eunuchs, resident aliens, free commoners, mallams (Arabic: muCallim -- teacher; in Hausa, anyone with a Koranic education), and hereditary nobility. Members of each group could fit into hierarchies within the group, but the groups themselves could not be ranked into a strict hierarchy, because different values and opportunities existed in each. Politically, the groups were intermeshed at all levels of authority. The top political offices of each kingdom were held by slaves, eunuchs, mallams, aliens, and nobility all balanced against each other.¹⁷

The wealth of the state and that of the individuals running it were differentiated,¹⁸ but in practice the use of wealth was mingled in the persons of officeholders. The wealth of the state derived from basic sources: (1) taxes, fines and other levies on the produce of the subjects; (2) the agricultural and industrial produce of slave villages;¹⁹ (3) tolls, commissions, gifts and other speculative income through trade; and (4) plunder and tribute, the products of war. Officeholders had personal access to a cut in each of these, depending upon their positions. Non-officeholders could gain wealth through trade, by investing in slaves, or through war and plunder. In the late nineteenth century in both Fulani and Habe Zaria, the easiest road to wealth was successful politics.²⁰

This was probably equally true in the Habe city-states of the eighteenth century. Even if one chose trade or a military career, one had to be a successful politician to rise in either profession. All means of gaining wealth theoretically were under the control of the state, and actually were thus guarded when the clientship system with the sarki at the top was functioning correctly. In practice everywhere in the Sudan, wealth had to be under the control of the state in order to ensure the stability of a state. For with wealth one could obtain horses, guns, spears, slaves and either the respect or the fear of the people -- hence political power. The political power of any one individual or interest group was integrated into the state only by Macchiavellian considerations and the clientship system. Therefore, it was essential that the sarki personally strive to keep a firm hand on both powerful individuals, and also all means by which persons might gain power. It is not necessary to consider other forms of control here; the relevant point is that this was the logical ground for close state regulation of merchants and trade. Many critical military supplies were brought by merchants, especially guns, horses, swords and shields. But commerce, because it involved the presence of aliens with no stake in the other aspects of a polity and/or the movement of subjects outside their ruler's sphere of authority, was inherently difficult to control.

17. For a full description, see M. G. Smith, Government in Zazzau (Oxford, 1960), chs. III and IV.

18. There was an official royal treasury in Kano at least as early as the fifteenth century, for the Kano Chronicle reports that Treasurer then became a eunuch office. See H. Richmond Palmer, ed. and trans., Sudanese Memoirs (London, 1928), III, 112.

19. Slave villages (Hausa: rinjoji [sing. rinji], gwandu, or rumada) were founded by nobles and wealthy men with a large number of captives and a few free men or trusted clients as overseers. They were one of the main sources of stable income for nobility.

20. Smith, Economy of Zaria, 91.

The Asantehene deliberately discouraged extensive commerce with the English for fear it would sap the vitality of the nation in war or lead to betrayal by ambitious merchants.²¹ The Hausa states did not go that far, nor did they even segregate the commercial community from the rest of the people, as was common in many African states.²²

In Hausaland, the major source of control lay in the state's own importance as a merchant. Secondly, all merchants traded at the pleasure of the sarkin and his agents. This was customary throughout the Sudan and the Sahara. The minute that merchants entered a new domain, they sent a greeting or went in person to greet the king, thus symbolizing their recognition of this right.²³ Their presence could not in any case fail to be known, as the movements of strangers were always reported by agents or villagers to their lords.

Prices were fixed and events in the market supervised by the Sarkin Kasuwa (literally, chief of the market), a political appointee under the Iyan Bakin Kasuwa or national Minister of Commerce.²⁴ In Fulani Zazzau (Zaria) the Magajin Kasuwa was the equivalent of the Iyan Bakin Kasuwa of the Habe state. Any one of the high titles of the Habe states before the word kasuwa (market) could be used for this office. Each Sarkin Kasuwa had a number of assistants depending on the size of the market. Their titles, like craft guild and village offices, reduplicated the top titles in the state.²⁵ The Sarkin Kasuwa visited every caravan as soon as it arrived and consulted with the sarkin or an assistant as to how goods should be sold. Anything in which the king was interested was brought before him first,²⁶ and the rest was divided among the dillalai, or official brokers, for public sale.

The market officials were in charge of the dillalai, who likewise were public officials.²⁷ These were appointed to every section of the market to supervise transactions in each commodity. They were expected to insure that prices, quality and measurements were correctly observed. Clapperton found this system working very well in

21. T. Edward Bowdich, Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee (London, 1966), 335-336.
22. This was the usual origin of the famous dual cities of the Sudan, like Koumbi-Saleh, the capital of ancient Ghana, or Kuka in Bornu.
23. Horneman noted in his journal that when his caravan entered the kingdom of Fezzan, the chief of the caravan sent a messenger to give notice of the arrival of the caravan, and to bear a letter of respect to the sultan from each merchant individually. Bovill, Missions, I, 88.
24. See "Constitution of the Habe Zazzau," Appendix A, in Smith, Government, 335.
25. Ibid., list facing p. 36.
26. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Clapperton, 43.
27. Nadel reports that in Nupe, whose market system was modeled on the Hausa one, even to the use of Hausa titles, the dillalai were organized into a guild like other craftsmen. They elected a head or Sarkin Dillalai, who corresponded to the Sarkin Kasuwa mentioned in the Hausa markets. Siegfried Nadel, A Black Byzantium (London, 1942), 330.

Kano in 1823, or at least he must have been told how it was supposed to work. He reported:

. . . The market is regulated with the greatest fairness and the regulations are strictly and impartially enforced. If a tobe or turkadee [man's robe], purchased here, is carried to Bornou or any other distant place, without being opened, and is there discovered to be of inferior quality, it is immediately sent back as a matter of course, -- the name of the dylala, or broker, being written inside every parcel. In this case, the dylala must find out the seller who, by the laws of Kano, is forthwith obliged to refund the purchase money.²⁸

Livestock products from the herds of pastoral Fulani, Tuareg and Arabs were among the most active items in the Hausa markets, since Hausaland supplied much of the rain forest area with meat, and all markets with leather. The Sarkin Pawa, or Chief of the Butchers, was among the few representatives of occupational guilds to have an office on the national level. He was responsible for assuring a steady supply and constant price of meat, procuring special orders for the sarki, and overseeing the affairs of butchers' guilds. He thus approximately paralleled the office of Iyan Bakin Kasuwa, but had responsibility only over the butchers' section of the market. His office existed in both Fulani and Habe Zazzau, but was held by a Habe even under the Fulani.²⁹ Whether these market officials or the sarki personally supervised state trading ventures is not known; probably it depended upon the inclinations of the sarki.

Remuneration for state-level market officials came from fiefs which were attached to their offices.³⁰ They were thus directly supported by the state, not by the proceeds of the markets. There was also some income to the public officials from markets in the form of a 2% commission on all sales and/or stall rents in the market. There were also ferry fees (caravans were obliged to cross at ferries even if there was a dry ford nearby),³¹ caravan tolls, and gaisuwa or "greetings" received by all ranks of officials in expectation of favors.

Exactly how this income was distributed is very difficult to determine. Clapperton wrote:

The sheikh of the soug [Ar.: suq -- market]³² also fixes the prices of all wares, for which he is entitled to a small commission, at the rate of 50 whydah or cowries, according to the standard exchange between this silver money and this shell currency.³³ There is another custom regulated with equal certainty and in universal practice: the seller returns to the

28. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, 53.

29. It lapsed after the first appointment, however. Butchering is a Habe occupation, disdained by the Fulani. Smith, Government, n. 63.

30. Ibid., 37-40.

31. Hugh Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa (London, 1829), 79.

32. This is the Arabicized version of the Hausa title, Sarkin Kasuwa.

33. See below, "Currencies."

buyer a stated part of the price, by way of blessing, as they term it. . . . This is a discount of 2% on the purchase money but, if the bargain is made in a hired house, it is the landlord who receives the luck penny.³⁴

The reference to a hired house must mean either a dillalai's stall in the market or the establishment of a mai gida (a type of innkeeper whose function will be discussed below). Shabeeny, a Moroccan merchant who was in Hausaland about 1787, said that "foreign merchants always employ agents, or brokers, to trade to advantage; a man should reside sometime before he begins."³⁵ If foreigners always used agents, then the "luck penny" must, in practice, never have gone to a foreign buyer. For transactions which occurred in the market place it went to the dillalai whose stall was used, and for those in the compounds of mai gida, it went to the host.

A portion of dillalai's commission was probably remitted to the Sarkin Kasuwa, either as an official obligation or as gaisuwa, to assure that an appropriate amount of business was directed his way.³⁶ A portion of the Sarkin Kasuwa's income also found its way to the fiefholder in whose territory the market lay, or to the state official for markets, but it was probably not a significant amount. High political officials gleaned most of their income from their fiefs and the gaisuwa of their clients.

All ranks of market agents and officials, by virtue of their power to control commercial contacts and profits, were very eligible for gaisuwa from all interested parties. For trade, like politics, was powerfully influenced by personal considerations. This probably explains Shabeeny's caution that "a man should reside some time before he begins." Shehu dan Fodio denounced the pervasive practice of gaisuwa vigorously, and made it one of the moral justifications for his jihad.³⁷ It is possible that immediately after or during the jihad there was some improvement in this area, and that this is what led Clapperton to comment on the impartiality of the administration of the Kano market. However, in the later nineteenth-century Fulani domains it was as common as ever.³⁸

In addition to the public officials administering the market, there were a variety of independent persons who provided for other needs of traders. The focus of this network was the mai gida (literally, master of the house; plural: masu gida) who took in certain foreign merchants, housed and fed them, provided storage for their goods, and often found buyers for valuable items.

34. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Clapperton, 51.

35. James G. Jackson, An Account of Timbuktoo and Hausa (London, 1820), cited in Hodgkin, Perspectives, 187.

36. Nadel says, "The Etsu [Sarkin] Dillali, placed in control over all Bida brokers, levies a small fee from them, in return for which he guarantees them equal access to the valuable and profitable goods which arrive in Bida from abroad. Nadel, Byzantium, 330.

37. Uthman dan Fodio, Kitab al-Farq.

38. Smith, "Political Corruption."

With regard to this institution, the personal experience of the early explorers can be confusing, since they traveled sometimes as ambassadors under royal protection, and sometimes as merchants. When under royal auspices they were lodged, escorted and given beasts of burden at the expense of the sarki, or rather via royal levies on the local inhabitants for such services. When traveling as merchants they camped in tents along the route, except at large cities where they lodged with masu gida in the trans-Saharan merchants' wards. The masu gida are identifiable in the explorers' journals as the permanently resident foreign merchants who were keepers of the traders' grapevine in the alien merchants quarters, people like Hat Salah in Kano to whom Clapperton was given a letter of introduction by Sheikh al-Kanemy, the de facto ruler of Bornu.³⁹ Hat Salah provided Clapperton with a palatial house first for three Spanish dollars and later two dollars a month.⁴⁰ The masu gida in the wards where indigenous African traders stayed were probably either Habe or members of the ethnic group which predominated in that ward.

Polly Hill has studied the institution of the mai gida as it exists throughout West Africa today, and concluded that the mai gida receives little regular remuneration from his guest, but is amply compensated by the generosity of his guest and those local people to whom the mai gida introduces his guest. This is certainly compatible with what we know of the modus vivendi in other aspects of eighteenth and nineteenth century Hausa trade.

The masu gida, both alien and indigenous, appear to have been integrated into the political system informally, in a relationship which resembled the clientship system. Denham and Clapperton found some of their landlords to be special friends of certain government officials, and others to be considerably influential with their rulers.⁴¹ Occasionally one finds a note in the Kano Chronicle saying that a sarki imitated the Arabs of Kano, in which case the "Arabs" must refer either to visiting mallams or to persons involved in the trans-Saharan trade.⁴² These played the role of personal confidants and advisors, and sometimes of supervisors of the North African mercantile community for the sarki.

We know very little of the activities of indigenous merchants and other Africans at this time, since the explorers almost never lived with them. Once, while traveling with a predominantly Hausa caravan through Nupe, Clapperton commented that Hausa merchants always camped outside of the cities (in campgrounds maintained for that purpose), whereas the Bornu merchants stayed in the towns.⁴³ They traveled with their families in most cases, although nine-tenths of the traders from south of the Niger were women, and he does not say what they did with their families.

39. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Clapperton, 40.

40. Ibid., 41.

41. E.g., Mohammed Gomsoo, Chief of the Arabs at Sokoto. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Clapperton, 86-87.

42. E.g., Babba Zaki, 1768-1776. "Kano Chronicle," in Palmer, Memoirs, III, 126.

43. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 137.

Trade was one of the most prestigious professions in Habe society. Successful merchants (Hausa: attajirai) ranked just below mallams and nobility in the Hausa social scale, and above all other professions.⁴⁴ The most successful had an opportunity to invest in slave villages, and to give lavish gifts to their lords, which might win for them or their children a political career in Habe society. In Fulani areas they were barred from high office by being members of the conquered race.⁴⁵

The diplomatic relations which encouraged trade usually took the form of formalized friendships, and sometimes of clientship-like arrangements. They were established either by force or by diplomacy, but it is often difficult to determine which was used. Historians have searched in vain for the "conquest" which gave Bornu the right to three centuries of "gaisuwa or tsare [a levy]"⁴⁶ from the Hausa states. The problem is that all that was required was actual military superiority plus an initial show of strength to establish this right.⁴⁷ The Kano Chronicle makes it clear that this relationship was established in order to open a trade route from Bornu to Gwonja in the north of present-day Ghana.⁴⁸

Another method of opening a road, but probably a more expensive one, was to send impressive gifts and ambassadors to all of the states on the route. One of the African explorers who wanted to go to Timbuktu by a route where the Basha to Tripoli had no connections wrote to London saying that he needed to make a £2000 present to the Basha. The reason: the Basha would have to open up a new road with presents to other African chiefs.⁴⁹

Among the Hausa states, "treaty" relationships took the form of abokan wasa (literally, play friends or joking relations).⁵⁰ The "friends" never fought with each other and sometimes aided or mediated for one another. The alignments in the central Hausa states corresponded exactly with the two main axes of trade. Zamfara was friends with Katsina, and Kano with Zaria. In the eighteenth century the western caravan route passed through Katsina and Zamfara, while the eastern and southern route passed from Kano through Zaria. The coincidence of friendship and trade routes surely was not an accident, but an integral interrelationship.

44. Smith, "Social and Economic Change," 51.

45. Smith, Economy of Zaria, 92. Richard Hull, from field work in Katsina in 1966-1967, found that Habe were not allowed to hold positions even as high as village chief after 1806 in Katsina. (Field notes).

46. The terminology is from the Kano Chronicle, and expresses the ambiguity of these semi-voluntary payments. Palmer, Memoirs, III, 109.

47. Ibid., 109-110.

48. Ibid.

49. Major Laing to Lord Bathurst, Tripoli, May 1825, in Bovill, Missions, I, 204.

50. This is one of the four formalized relationships which obtain between various kin in Hausa society. It also links ethnic groups, states and occupational groups. Smith, Economy of Zaria, 41.

In the nineteenth century it seems that more formal, written agreements were among the innovations introduced by the Islamic revivalists in Bornu and Hausaland. Muhammad Bello, Sarkin Musulmi in Clapperton's time, mentioned several letters which Sheikh al-Kanemy had written him,⁵¹ and there are letters still in existence from the Basha of Tripoli to Bello and al-Kanemy to Bello which reveal an understanding between Tripoli, Bornu and Sokoto.⁵² This entente, however, was not achieved without the help of embassies and gifts all around, so the innovation was not particularly radical.⁵³

Routes

Although itineraries changed considerably during the period 1780-1833, the main axes of trade passing through Hausaland remained the same. Only three axes are listed here; itinerary changes will be discussed among the developments of the period (section two). The best known trade route of Hausaland is that with North Africa via Ghadames, Murzuk, or Tuat. Another major axis, traversed partly by Saharan and North African merchants and partly by merchants of the Sudan, was the route from Bornu through Hausaland and west along the edge of the rain forest to Gwonja in the Ashanti hinterland. It was often known as the salt and kola route, although many other articles passed along it, especially leather goods and different varieties of native cloth.

The third major axis of trade was south from Hausaland through Zaria to Nupe, Oyo or Dahomey and finally to the coast at Whydah, Badagry or Lagos. The Hausa language was well known throughout these regions, and known by isolated individuals in villages from Iboland to the Ivory Coast. Traders and mallams evidently penetrated in all directions to some degree, but regular large-scale trading was confined to the above axes.⁵⁴

Ethnicity and Commodities

The commerce of Hausaland can be broken down according to ethnic groups and commodities. It is convenient to consider these two

51. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 197.

52. See A. D. H. Bivar, "Arabic Documents of Northern Nigeria," BSOAS, XXII (1959), 332-334, 344-349.

53. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 170-171.

54. Research into the spread of commercial loan words from the Hausa language supports this conclusion. The Hausa forms of words for gold, gun, camel and horse had, by the mid-nineteenth century, spread widely along the above axes, but not into the areas to the southeast. L. A. G. Colvin, "Commercially Relevant Loan-Words in West African Languages" (unpublished paper).

aspects together, since they frequently overlapped. For instance, the Kel Owi Tuareg of Agades had a monopoly on the natron (often called trona) and salt of Bilma.⁵⁵ This they distributed throughout Hausaland and all along the route to Ashanti. They returned with kola nuts from Ashanti and the grain and fine indigo-dyed cloth of Kano to be carried to the Tuareg of the desert and to North Africa. It must be noted, however, that their monopoly was secure only between Bilma and Agades. At Agades or in Hausa cities, much of the salt and natron passed into the hands of North Africans, Hausa, Gwonja and Bornu merchants.

Tuat, Ghadamsi, and Murzuk merchants generally handled the products of Turkish and North African manufacture, as well as European imports coming from the Barbary ports. They also brought horses, which were preferred to those bred locally. These merchants sometimes stopped in Agades or Bornu, and usually went no farther than Hausaland.⁵⁶ Some more adventurous souls went on into the interior, but generally they passed their goods on to Tuareg, Hausa or other African merchants. Those who remained in the higher latitudes had the choice of selling their goods outright or putting them out on credit to local merchants. The latter was probably the more common practice. Clapperton recorded several instances of merchants who were delayed or hindered in trying to collect from their creditors.⁵⁷ Similar observations were made by Leo Africanus in the sixteenth century, and have been repeated by travelers ever since.

Slaves were the item most in demand for export to the Arab world. Denham said that the "Arabs" would take nothing else, and in every list drawn up in the eighteenth century, slaves came at the top.⁵⁸ At the end of the eighteenth century these came primarily from Bornu, or rather, from Begharmi via Bornu. Begharmi was known as the best source of eunuchs.⁵⁹ During the jihad the Hausa states became major suppliers themselves, for it was customary for both the Habe and the Fulani to sell their prisoners of war. The Zaberma-Gurma-Dahomey area west of the Niger was also plagued by chronic instability, which meant, of course, a large turnover in slaves. Most of these probably went south to the coast,⁶⁰ but some also went

55. Natron is properly hydrated sodium carbonate, but sometimes refers to either potassium nitrate (saltpeter) or sodium nitrate (Chile saltpeter). It is collected naturally in some salt lakes in the desert, and was gathered by local residents. It was used as a medicine, as a salt substitute, for making dyes, and together with snuff as a stimulant, Lucas reported the Kel Owi monopoly in 1788 and later explorers verified it. Proceedings of the Association, I, 167.

56. Ibid., 163.

57. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Clapperton, 131.

58. Ibid., Denham, 330.

59. Horneman in Bovill, Missions, I, 118.

60. Hausa were among the largest suppliers to the Atlantic slave trade in the early nineteenth century, according to Curtin and Vansina's analysis of Koelle's informants. Philip Curtin and Jan Vansina, "Sources of the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Slave Trade," JAH, V, 2 (1964), 185-208.

north -- not to mention east and west into the slave villages and slave armies of other African states. Women who were taken slaves were not sent south, because the Atlantic slave traders had little use for them. They were in demand throughout the Muslim world -- both African and Arab -- for seraglios.

The indigenous African market for slaves must have exceeded the number exported. All centralized West African states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were built on slave labor and defended by slave armies. Estimates of the proportion of slaves to free men in Hausaland range from 30:1, the estimate given Clapperton by Hat Salah in 1826, to 1:1, the estimate made by Barth in 1851.⁶¹ The figure of Hat Salah was probably closer to the truth for both periods. Barth was not familiar with the variety of positions held by slaves, and probably mistook many of them for free men.

Who the main indigenous slave traders were is one of the major mysteries of Hausa commerce in this period. Kirk-Greene mentions that the Fulani (settled) were the main slave traders in the Adamawa region.⁶² If that was also true in Hausaland, it has conveniently been forgotten. It seems unlikely, however. The Fulani nobility scorn trade of any kind as a worldly occupation, and today only a small proportion of the merchants in Hausaland are Fulani.⁶³ Lander however met an exiled ruler from Panda, near the confluence of the Benue and the Niger Rivers, who said that the Fulani had come to his domains as traders and then overthrown him. In this area, they are most likely to have been selling slaves or ivory to the Igala and Ibo who controlled the rest of the path to the coast.

A late eighteenth-century source remarked that the caravans to Morocco brought:

a great number of slaves, purchased at Timbuctoo, from the Wangareen [Mande], Houssonian [Hausa], and other slatees [generic term for slave traders], who bring them from those regions which border on the Jibbel Kunia, or Mountains of the Moon, a chain which, with little or no intermissions, runs through the continent of Africa from west to east, namely from Ashantee in the West, to Abyssinia in the east.⁶⁴

Since assimilated Fulani would probably have been called Hausa by strangers, this still does not establish whether Fulani or Hausa predominated as slave merchants. Since, however, the Hausa did not carry their slaves to the coast like the Mande in the far west and the Nyamwezi in East Africa, there is no reason to assume that the slave trade in Hausaland was the kind of specialized monopoly it was in other areas. Probably slaves, like other merchandise, were carried mainly by Habe, but also by other nationalities.

61. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 171-172; Heinrich Barth, Barth's Travels in Nigeria, A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, ed. (London, 1962), 114.
62. A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Adamawa Past and Present (London, 1958).
63. Smith, Economy of Zaria, 100.
64. James G. Jackson, An Account of the Empire of Morocco (London, 1808), 206. The Mountains of the Moon were the legendary source of the Nile.

In addition to slaves, trans-Saharan merchants returned north with Hausa cloth, household utensils, leather work and a special kind of seamless skin bag for water and other liquids. It must be added that most of the grain consumed in the central desert was grown in Hausaland, and had been since at least Leo Africanus' time.

Commodities of local manufacture and growth, moving within the sudan belt, appear to have been largely in the hands of indigenous traders. These also distributed North African goods to other African states. The most prominent in trade through Hausaland were native Hausa, resident Tuareg, Dagomba, Gwonja, Pupawa (Nupe men), and some Mande and Bornuese. All of the long-distance traders of all nations were reported to have been Muslims.⁶⁵ Ivor Wilks claims that they belonged to supra-tribal Islamic trading associations, but says nothing of when these originated or how they functioned.⁶⁶

Unfortunately none of the explorers paid much attention to ethnicity among the indigenous traders. Clapperton's description of his journey with a Habe caravan through territory independent of the Fulani perhaps best typifies the nature of trade under the Habe regimes. This caravan consisted of more than a thousand men and women, and as many beasts of burden (bullocks, asses and mules). Hausa and Gwonja are the only two ethnic groups which he mentioned specifically but others were probably present.⁶⁷ Most of the cargo of "these Hausa traders," he wrote, was kola nuts. These they had exchanged on the fringes of the Ashanti empire for natron, red glass beads, and a few slaves, mainly unmanageable ones. Some of the merchants had slaves to carry their loads, but some had "no more property than they carry on their own heads."⁶⁸

In Nupe the caravan met with traders and other caravans from Yoruba and Dahomey in the south, Bornu in the east, and several of the Hausa states. They found large mercantile communities also in Nupe and Borgu, bordering the Niger.⁶⁹ They were told that before the jihad people from Benin, Ijebu (near Lagos) and southern Nupe used to come there.⁷⁰ Many of these southern merchants must have also frequented the southernmost Hausa markets before the jihad, although the natural places where goods changed hands all around lay in Nupe, along the Niger.

Some Hausa fatake (professional long-distance traders) then as now probably specialized in certain products. The cattle traders and kola traders are the best known today. As pastoral Fulani are loath to slaughter or sell their own cattle, each herd owner had a Hausa

65. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Denham, 80; Joseph Dupuis, Journal of a Residence in Ashantee (London, 1966), ix, xi.

66. Ivor Wilks, "The Position of Muslims in Metropolitan Ashanti in the Early Nineteenth Century," in I. M. Lewis, ed., Islam in Tropical Africa (London, 1966), 327.

67. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 74.

68. Ibid., 68.

69. Ibid., 123, 129.

70. Ibid., 136.

agent who came to him to buy and take the cattle to market.⁷¹ When the Fulani clan migrated to seasonal grazing lands, the Hausa agent came to buy from it periodically. The Hausa was usually a butcher himself or, if not, he sold the cattle to the butchers.

The kola traders traveled to the Gwonja and sometimes the Ashanti markets to procure their supply. They loaded them in wide, flat baskets packed with wet leaves for preservation, and carried them on bullocks the long road home. To purchase the kolas they brought cotton cloth, trans-Saharan imports, meat, leather products, and North African and European goods.

Slave agents were employed by merchants of all nations to conduct various aspects of the trade. Denham noticed in Bornu that the principle slaves of each merchant did the bargaining, while their masters looked on.⁷² For the masters the market was more of a social occasion and opportunity to make contacts to further their various business and political concerns. Clapperton reported that Nupe slaves were most highly valued as trading agents in Hausaland.⁷³

Neither the commodities exchanged nor the ethnic groups involved changed significantly during the period from 1780 to 1833. However, there were important changes in the markets and routes accessible to traders of certain nationalities. These will be discussed in the appropriate chronological context.

Currencies and Credit

The currencies in use in Hausa markets throughout the period under consideration were cowries (for small to medium-sized purchases) and silver Maria Theresa dollars for larger items. These functioned as standards of value, means of payment, and media of exchange. They thus meet all of the criteria usually established to distinguish currencies from bartered goods.⁷⁴ Currencies having greater "face" value than intrinsic value are sometimes distinguished as "token" currencies.⁷⁵ Cowries qualified under this rubric, but Maria Theresa dollars were a precious metal currency. In addition to these there were other commodities of trade which can be described as "special-purpose moneys" because they had only one or two of the above-mentioned functions. Slaves, for example, had a standard value in relation to horses, camels and guns. They could also be used as a means of payment, for example as tribute or in payment of fines and ransoms. However, they rarely functioned as a medium of exchange. The same is true of the standard measure of grain, a mudu (a medium-sized calabash), which was used for purchases in a smaller value

71. Marguerite Dupire, "The Fulani -- Peripheral Markets of a Pastoral People," in Paul Bohannon and George Dalton, eds., Markets in Africa (New York, 1965).
72. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, 70.
73. Ibid., Clapperton, 54.
74. Polanyi, Trade and Markets, 264-266.
75. Kirk-Greene, "Currencies," 133.

range. Smith has found that the average weight of a mudu of un-threshed rice today is just under two pounds.⁷⁶ It was of this type of money that Clapperton wrote when he said:

The value of commodities in barter seems to be maintained with a certain stability, somewhat like the money rate of exchange in Europe, by fixing a local standard price for those articles in greatest demand, in lieu of the fictitious par of exchange, which with all, powerfully influences and indirectly regulates all money transactions.⁷⁷

Gold was reported to be one of the articles received by North Africans in the "Empire of Cashna" (Katsina) by Lucas in 1788. However, he noted that it was more expensive there than in the Fezzan.⁷⁸ The implication of this is that gold was actually a currency, which Arabs received in payment for their goods on occasion. Yet gold as a currency was unknown in Katsina or any other part of Hausaland according to all subsequent reports. This confusion stems from the fact that Lucas' informant mistakenly considered Agades part of the "empire" of Katsina.⁷⁹ At Agades gold is known to have been used as a currency, as it was also among the states between Borgu and Gwonja.⁸⁰

Both of the regular currencies of Hausaland, cowries and Maria Theresa dollars, were imported by Europeans beginning in the eighteenth century. Cowries were brought from the Maldive Islands and sold on the Slave Coast for slaves and palm oil. From there they were imported inland to the ever-expanding cowry currency area.⁸¹ Some were also carried from Turkish and European ports to North Africa and thence across the desert.⁸²

The silver Maria Theresa dollars, which were first coined in Austria and Spain in 1780, were in use from the Barbary ports southward until the end of the nineteenth century. They continued to be minted for export by various European countries even after they went out of circulation in Europe in 1854.⁸³ This was a considerable expense to the Hausa states, which might have been spared had they minted their own currency. By importing a currency for local use, they not only had little control over inflation, but they had to pay with exports for every increase in the amount of money in circulation.

At present, virtually nothing is known of Hausa fiscal policy, except that exchange rates were set by market officials responsible to the ruler.⁸⁴ The rates fluctuated in response to changes in supply and demand,⁸⁵ but government officials had the power to determine

76. Smith, "Social and Economic Change," 290.

77. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Clapperton, 5.

78. Proceedings of the Association, I, 169.

79. Ibid., I, 167.

80. Dupuis, Journal, Pt. II, xli.

81. Hiskett, "Materials."

82. Jackson, Morocco.

83. Kirk-Greene, "Currencies," 146.

84. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Clapperton, 5.

85. See Hiskett, "Materials."

when they would adjust their prices. The official exchange rates probably served to prevent short-term speculation, or at least confined it to government officials.⁸⁶

The value of cowries in relation to English sterling was about 500 to the pound sterling according to both Lucas (1788) and Mungo Park (1795).⁸⁷ When Clapperton was in Sokoto in 1823 they had sunk in value so that it took 13,000 cowries to equal the value of a pound sterling, and by the time he returned in 1826, a pound was worth 20,000 cowries.⁸⁸ This inflation was apparently both local and temporary, for both Dupuis' approximately contemporary figure for Ashanti and Barth's later (1851) figure for Hausaland showed a much slower rate of inflation. Dupuis' figures showed cowries to be worth about 7000 to the pound on the Niger at Hausaland, and Barth's figures work out to 12,500 cowries equivalent to the pound.⁸⁹ The circumstances surrounding this inflation will be discussed in the appropriate chronological context.

There are no figures for the value of the silver dollar in the eighteenth century, perhaps because it was coined only in 1780 and did not reach Hausaland quickly. The first figure that we have came from Morocco at about the turn of the century, and valued the dollar at 4s. 5d.⁹⁰ At the time of Clapperton's second journey (1826), it was worth 3s., but when Barth was there it was again worth 4s.⁹¹ Thus the dollar shows the same temporary devaluation in the first quarter of the century, and a slower long-term devaluation. However, presumably since it was a precious metal currency, the swings in value were not so severe as those of the cowry.

Like currencies, credit was an essential part of the commercial system. It functioned both to extend the amount of capital in circulation and to overcome the obstacles of carrying valuables long distances. Credit arrangements followed customary forms, but were all originally specific and personal. Terms were bargained and agreed upon for each extension of credit separately, even where the same parties were involved. The agreements were enforceable in local courts even where both parties were aliens.⁹²

The major creditors seem to have been North Africans and rulers, although presumably wealthy Hausa traders followed their lead.

86. Denham found both the ruler and his ministers involved in speculation at the public expense in Bornu.
87. Proceedings of the Association, I, 167; Mungo Park, Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa, 1795, 1796, and 1797 (London, 1799), 199.
88. First figure based on Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, 51; second cited in Clapperton, Second Expedition, 173.
89. Dupuis, Journal, Pt. II, cxiii, cxiv; Barth, Barth's Travels, 123.
90. Jackson, Morocco, 208.
91. Barth mentioned that sixty dollars was the equivalent of £12 sterling.
92. Denham and Clapperton went before the gadi in Bornu to collect a debt contracted in Murzuk, Fezzan. See Narrative, 149, Appendix X.

All were professing Muslims, although a few in Timbuktu were reported to be converted Jews. The prohibition against lending money at interest in Islamic law had little practical effect. Smith reports that wealthy Hausa traders today lend freely, taking great risks, which are "covered by a high and irreligious rate of interest (25% per month)."⁹³ Wealthy Hausa traders during our period probably lent money to smaller traders, and put goods out on credit among peoples dependent on them, just as the trans-Saharan merchants did in Hausaland.

Trans-Saharan merchants with large amounts of goods had no choice but to put them out on credit, since they could not sell them in one place without drastically lowering the prices which they received. The petty traders to whom they gave them spread out into the small towns and villages to distribute the wares widely. When they had sold all that they had received, they returned to pay off their creditor, keeping a portion for themselves. Personal contacts and credit guarantees were important in this arrangement, because the trans-Saharan merchants were well aware of the risks involved. Once he had received the goods, the petty trader might well abscond to await the arrival of the rainy season. Then the merchant faced the prospect of staying over another year or returning without his payment.⁹⁴ Most states enforced debtor laws rigorously to prevent this, but they were not always able to find the fugitives.

Another form of credit was that intended to overcome distances or changes in currencies. North African merchants and rulers usually contracted with explorers to extend them credit in the Sudan via their agents there. Major Laing carried a guarantee of credit from the Basha of Tripoli, and another from one of the Basha's chief ministers, who was a wealthy merchant. The latter reads in part:

The bearer of the present, the English Traveller, if He is in want of money during his present journey -- any of our Friends, & correspond with [correspondents] & those who may have our Funds in hand, they may advance to the said Englishman all those Sums which He may want & take his Bill on the English Consul in Tripoli, so that it may be paid here.

Date: 14 June, 1825
Signed: Mohamed D'Gheis⁹⁵

Laing did not live to collect on this, so we do not know how he was to be paid. Denham and Clapperton's agreement with a Fezzan merchant, however, specified that they were to be paid in the local currencies in Bornu and Kano. Thus this type of agreement saved the traveler from the threat of robbery en route, and provided him with ready money on arrival. What it cost is nowhere mentioned. It is reasonable to assume that credit in any form was expensive, however.

93. Smith, Economy of Zaria, 101.

94. Clapperton met an unhappy merchant in Katagum, vexed by this dilemma. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Clapperton, 131.

95. Cited in Bovill, Missions, I.

And since the sudanese were generally the debtors of the trans-Saharan merchants, the burden of the expense was born by the economies of the sudanese states.

In conclusion, the picture of Hausa trade which has been re-created here fits very closely the model which Karl Polanyi calls "administered trade" -- as opposed to "gift trade" and "market trade."⁹⁶ The main criterion differentiating administered trade from market trade is that, in the administered form, prices are set by a government official, whereas in market trade, the price mechanism is essentially self-regulating. Clearly, the terms have nothing to do with whether or not exchange occurs in a market place. As a matter of fact, market places are more typical of administered than of market trade. An outline of the characteristics of administered trade is set out by Polanyi as follows:

Administered trade has its firm foundation in treaty relationships that are more or less formal. Since on both sides the import interest is as a rule determinative, trading runs through government-controlled channels . . . This extends to the manner in which business is transacted, including arrangements concerning "rates" or proportions of the units of exchange; port facilities [in the sudan the equivalent would be the provision of necessary beasts of burden and lodging or campsites for traders]; weighing; checking of quality; the physical exchange of goods; storage; safekeeping; the control of trading personnel; regulation of "payments" credits; price differentials.⁹⁷

A corollary of this is that trading is a status occupation, and that the motive for trading is to acquire status or goods which enhance one's prestige, rather than a pure profit motive. The only area in which Hausa trade did not fit Polanyi's concept of administered trade is in the manner of government control which regulated it. Polanyi pictured commerce as rigidly segregated and controlled through a "port of trade," which was held aloof from the political center of the state for security reasons.⁹⁸ Hausa trade was more closely integrated into the life of the society than this, and regulated by more informal relationships.

* * * * *

Developments of the Period 1780-1833

In reconstructing the material in this section I have relied extensively on contemporary reports and on chronicles. Later explorers and traditions collected in the colonial period have been used sparingly. The first accounts of value are those of Europeans in North Africa in the final decades of the eighteenth century.⁹⁹

96. Polanyi, Trade and Markets, 262 ff.

97. Ibid., 262.

98. Ibid., 263.

99. Listed in the Introduction.

Among other things, these reports help us to place the importance of Hausa cities in relation to each other in the North African trade at the beginning of our period. Both of the Germans, Niebuhr (1772) and Einseidel (1785), mentioned Zamfara as the foremost center of Hausa trade, and the earlier report noted that caravans from Zamfara passed through Katsina on the way north.¹⁰⁰ By the earliest English report, in 1788, Katsina was second only to Bornu and had recently been superior.¹⁰¹ Since this statement seems to be the source of much subsequent exaggeration about the importance of Katsina (including Barth's), it is important to note the context of this information. The informant spoke of Katsina as including the city of Agades in the Asben oasis, as well as most of the western and southern Hausa states. It is clear from other statements that he considered Agades by far the most important commercial city,¹⁰² but he referred to it under the loose rubric of "Cashna" even when only Agades was meant.¹⁰³

Katsina and Air or Asben (of which Agades was the capital) may well have been closely tied, and Katsina may have been the greater military power, but there is no evidence that real sovereignty was ever exercised. A late eighteenth-century note in the Asben Chronicle mentioned a war by Katsina in Gobir in which a number of Asben soldiers appear to have died fighting for Katsina.¹⁰⁴ This suggests a tie between the two of either alliance or vassalage, most likely alliance. At this time all of the Hausa states were in conflict with Gobir, which was trying to expand. The fact that Lucas' informant confused this alliance with an empire under Katsina reflects either his confusion about various forms of diplomacy in Hausaland, or his desire to enhance the glories of Katsina.

Close examination of the various testimonies collected by the Association shows that Agades was actually the most important commercial city in the central sudan at the end of the eighteenth century. Katsina city, Kano, and Birnin Zamfara were important secondary centers to which merchants might progress after stopping at Agades or Bornu. Of the three Hausa towns, Katsina city seems to have been the most important. However, one must not ascribe Agades' commercial prominence to it, even if Katsina's government was at one time more powerful. Hausaland was regarded as the granary and textile center for the desert people, but Agades was their great emporium.

This brings us to the problem of whether or not the Hausa states may properly be described as "termini" in the trans-Saharan trade. Barth did so and many subsequent writers have followed his example, but one must seriously question whether the concept of a "terminus" was still appropriate to the situation in the nineteenth century. In the tenth through fourteenth centuries, termini were

100. Cited in Kurt Krieger, Geschichte von Zamfara: Sokoto-Provinz, Nordnigeria (Berlin, 1959), 77.

101. Proceedings of the Association, I, 125-127.

102. Ibid., 163.

103. Ibid., 167.

104. "An Asben Record," in H. Richmond Palmer, ed., Bornu Sahara and Sudan (London, 1936), 63-87.

literally stopping places, south of which Muslim merchants did not go. At that time these "terminal" cities lay in the first fertile zone south of the Sahara, and all of the produce of the south was brought up to them for sale. They included such famous spots as Walata in Ghana, Timbuktu in Mali, Gao in Songhay, and Njimi in Kanem, all of which lay in a zone receiving markedly less rainfall than the Hausa states.¹⁰⁵

The system of stopping at the edge of the Sudan had begun to break down even by the early sixteenth century, when Leo Africanus passed through Hausaland on his way between Agades and Bornu. At the end of the eighteenth century, if there was a "terminus" in the old sense on the Fezzan-Air route, it was Agades. There all of the produce of the Sudan could be purchased, and that of Europe and the Arab world sold. However, as we have seen, the desert merchants had infiltrated far south of there, and some of them regularly passed on to participate directly in the more diversified trade of the Sudan belt. According to the caravan itinerary which Lucas solicited from an old Fezzan merchant in 1788, "Many merchants go no farther [than Agades], but most commit to the care of their agents the slaves, cotton and senna which they purchased in the ten days in Agades."¹⁰⁶ The next trading stop which he listed on the itinerary was Katsina city. The informant offered to escort Lucas personally south and west of Katsina, through Zamfara, and across the Niger to Ashanti, a journey which he evidently had made before.¹⁰⁷

Within the fertile belt there were two major paths of trade traversing Hausaland, and both were known to the trans-Saharan merchants of the eighteenth century. One was the road from Ashanti to Bornu and Begharmi, and the other was the slave route through Nupe and Oyo to the coast at Whydah or Lagos. The former is said in the Kano Chronicle to have been opened in the fifteenth century to Gwonja (north of the later Ashanti state).¹⁰⁸ There is no reason to believe that this is not substantially accurate. In the eighteenth century kolas were still coming along the same route; the only change was that the Ashanti state had arisen in the west, and the western end of the route now dropped south to touch it.¹⁰⁹ By this time kolas had also become popular in North Africa, and were regularly imported there via Hausaland.¹¹⁰

The third major path of trade is the most mysterious and difficult for the historian. It led from Zaria south-southwest through

105. Only the approximate sites of some of the above cities are known, but the sites suggested all lie within the 100-400 mm/yr. rainfall area, whereas the Hausa states receive an average of 600-1400 mm/yr. Africa: Oxford Regional Economic Atlas (Oxford, 1965), maps pp. 56-57.

106. Proceedings of the Association, I, 163.

107. Ibid., 124.

108. Palmer, Memoirs, III, 109.

109. Proceedings of the Association, I, 168.

110. It took only another century for Americans to learn to make Coca-Cola from them.

Gwari to Nupe, thence usually through Katunga, the capital of Oyo, then south-southwest to Whydah or Lagos. The lack of information about the route stems largely from the fact that, since literate Muslims did not regularly traverse it, no one has bequeathed us a book of memoirs about his life as an inland slave trader. This is no reason to think the route unimportant, however. There is evidence that the increasing activity of Europeans on the coast in the eighteenth century had a noticeable effect on the trade of Hausaland. The Kano Chronicle, recently more correctly translated by M. Hiskett, reads, "In Sharifa's time (1703-1731) cowries (kurdi) came to Hausaland, because he was zealous in raiding . . ."¹¹¹ At this time, cowries were the established currency of Dahomey, Yoruba and Nupe, and were being imported by the slaving ships in great quantity. The influx into Kano probably came from there,¹¹² and increased whenever Kano was particularly active in slave raiding. Lucas mentioned that the Arabs call the cowries of Hausaland "Huedah," which certainly represented "Whydah," and which lends credit to this hypothesis.¹¹³

The most plausible explanation of the whole statement in the Kano Chronicle, therefore, is that Kano at this time began selling large numbers of slaves to the south. Moreover, this sale cannot have been a single venture or even a temporary reorientation of Kano's slave trade, or the Hausa would not have accepted cowries as payment. Since they are a token currency, their use had to be based on the confidence that there would be a continuing supply of the goods that the Hausa desired available from people who also used the cowry. They were no good to the trans-Saharan merchants, for they were not used above the Sudan, or even in Bornu.

This notice about cowries in the Kano Chronicle is accompanied by a number of other signs which seemed to augur a basic reorientation of Kano's trade toward the coast. This same sarki, Sharifa, instituted seven forms of extortion, which the chronicler plainly labels as such, including a tax on Kano's major market for the trans-Saharan trade, the "Jizian Kasua Kurmi."

In the next reign, between 1731 and 1743, the jizia or tax was reported so severe that "it nearly killed the market."¹¹⁴ By this time Kano was involved in constant defensive wars with Gobir, on the north. Another note says that all of the Arabs left the town of Kano. However, shields and most importantly, guns were brought from Nupe in the south.¹¹⁵ An old source of supply clearly had been lost and a new one gained. Later, however, peace with Gobir was restored, and the Arabs returned to the city.

In summary, it would appear from the above accounts that trade southward to the coast first became significant for Kano sometime near the beginning of the eighteenth century. The sarki who reigned between 1731 and 1743 must have pursued this connection energetically, for it would have taken firm relations with intermediate states to obtain guns from the coast as far inland as Kano. This same sarki

111. Hiskett, "Materials."

112. Hiskett reached the same conclusion.

113. Proceedings of the Association, I, 169.

114. Palmer, Memoirs, III, 124.

115. Ibid.

nearly destroyed the main trans-Saharan market of his town with impôts, and drove all of the Arabs from the city. In the latter half of the century, however, the favor of the trans-Saharan traders was again courted, and some sort of balance between the two trades achieved.

Kano's trade with Nupe passed mainly through Zaria. One may assume that Zaria was involved in trade to the south at least as early as, if not before, Kano. Although all of the Hausa states sold prisoners of war, Zaria was known as the slave raider par excellence, since she had access even in peace time to the pagan populations of the Bauchi Plateau. Along with Gurma, Zaberma and Gobir she supplied slaves to the markets of Zamfara, Katsina and Kano for the trans-Saharan and east-west trades. Zaria, Gwari and the Bauchi area may have supplied some slaves indirectly to the coastal trade before the eighteenth century, but not enough is known of that time to determine the question.

A generation or more after Kano's initial flirtation with the southern route, Gobir exchanged large gifts with Nupe.¹¹⁶ Bello wrote in a work which appears to have been lifted almost directly from a Gobir Chronicle:

Sarkin Nupe Maazu sent Bawa [Sarkin Gobir] five hundred female slaves and five hundred boys. Each boy carried twenty thousand cowries. Bawa sent a still handsomer return present. He sent a hundred horses of which twelve only were "Barabar [Bornu] horses" and female slaves which in beauty outshone [those from Nupe].¹¹⁷

Since Nupe was known in Hausaland primarily as the site of the best ferry and the major trading cities to the south, and was not close enough to Gobir to have furnished military support, it is logical to assume that this particular exchange served mainly to facilitate commerce. Following the description of this exchange in the Chronicle is a statement which reinforces this assumption. It reads, "Bawa [Sarkin Gobir] enforced a tax on Kaura [Kaura Namoda?] and developed the town, as is well known."¹¹⁸ It is unfortunate that the original text is not available, as the Arabic word of which "developed" is Palmer's translation might be less ambiguous than the English. The best interpretation of the sentence as it stands is that Bawa attracted or forced a lot of people to settle in the town, and possibly fortified it. The usual method of attracting people was to encourage and protect the town's market. Kaura Namoda lay just south of the old Birnin Zamfara, which Gobir had just destroyed, so it is probable that Bawa diverted the trade of Birnin Zamfara to the new center, Kaura Namoda, to lessen the chances of revolt by the Zamfarawa.

It is tempting to speculate that Gobir's consolidation of Zamfara (and even Zamfara's previous conquest and incorporation of

116. Bello's chronology places the reign of the Sarkin Gobir in which this occurred in 1772-1790. Krieger's has it in 1764-1782.

117. H. Richmond Palmer, "Western Sudan History, Being the 'Raudthat ul-Afkari' of Bello of Sokoto," Journal of the African Society, XV (1915-1916), 268.

118. Ibid.

Kebbi) were inspired by competition for control of the southwestern and southern trade routes. However, Kwame Arhin has recently sounded a warning note against reading a commercial motivation into every aspect of Ashanti policy.¹¹⁹ It is a point well taken, and equally appropriate to Hausa history. The fact that it was not possible to purchase sufficient arms and trade goods from the south as well as the north does not mean that the Hausa states immediately began a struggle for control of the southern trade routes.

The political reasons behind Gobir's expansion are lost in history, but it is possible to point out that the states to Gobir's south and east were militarily more vulnerable than those on the north, so if she wanted to expand, the south was a logical direction for power-political as well as commercial reasons. Also she had a cultural affinity with the Hausa states, which she did not share as deeply with her northern neighbors. Thus, although the real reasons behind her expansion may never be known, it is necessary to avoid assuming that they were "economic" in the Western sense.

Gobir's expansion was blunted at the end of the century, and Hausaland enjoyed a brief decade of peace before the Fulani rose up to seize the land. By a quirk of fate, the major battles of the jihad in Hausaland took place while the Napoleonic Wars were raging in Europe. Thus there was a break in the European reports just at the period when the Hausa sources were most garbled. The chronicles vary somewhat, but the action of the jihad can be summarized briefly. Shehu Uthman fled the court of Gobir and began rallying supporters about 1786.¹²⁰ When hostilities broke out in 1803 or 1804, they were initially directed against Gobir, although local rebellions of Fulani took place all across the central Sudan. In selecting Gobir, Shehu set himself against the power which had antagonized all of its neighbors thoroughly during the course of the last half century. He thus secured the active assistance of Zamfara,¹²¹ and the tolerance of Katsina, Kano, Zaria, and Bornu. After the initial campaign, however, he alienated them all, apparently by giving his blessings to local revolutionary leaders. The Habe states then combined against him and against the local Fulani, but failed to crush the revolts. The Shehu's army remained in western Hausaland through the jihad,¹²² but within five years local revolutionaries had forced the main cities in each of the Hausa states to capitulate.¹²³ In addition, there were Fulani rebellions in northwest and southwest Bornu, in the south of Mandera, and in Bauchi, where Mallam Adamu consolidated a new state.

119. Kwame Arhin, "The Structure of Greater Ashanti," *JAH*, VIII, 1 (1967), 65-85.

120. Sources and chronological problems are summarized in Marilyn Robinson Waldman, "The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment," *JAH*, VI, 3 (1965), 333-355.

121. Fulani and Habe sources agree on this: Palmer, "Raudthar ul-Afkari," 270; Krieger, *Geschichte*, 78-79.

122. Palmer, "Raudthar ul-Afkari," 270-273.

123. The Kano Chronicle says that Fulani rule was established there in 1807. Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 127. The Katsina Chronicle ceases to mention effective resistance as of 1807. *Ibid.*, 82. *The Chronicle of Abuja*, F. Heath, trans. (Ibadan, 1952), places the fall of Habe Zaria at about the same time.

Long-distance commerce must have slowed to a trickle during this period. Every dry season, which was normally the time for journeying, the Shehu's army was ravaging the towns of western Hausaland. All of the old trading centers on the way to Ashanti were either taken or effectively cut off from time to time. After the main Hausa towns all capitulated, in 1809 and 1810, the campaign was carried west across the Niger and south to Gwari and Nupe. For the next six years the war continued to be prosecuted in these areas, which partially block the trade routes to the south and west.

Not until the fourteenth year of the jihad (1817) does Bello suggest that the conquests were in any way consolidated. Then, he says, "The rule of the Fulani was established, and all peoples were overawed and obedient."¹²⁴ In the same year, however, Shehu Uthman died. Immediately all of the Hausa states again revolted. Only in 1819-1820 was the area around Sokoto and Gwandu again consolidated, and Bello's position as successor to the title of Sarkin Musulmi assured. Still-rebellious forces behind the dynasties of Gobir, Katsina, Gwari, Kotonkoro, Kebbi, Zamfara, Yauri, Borgu, Germa and Zaria ringed the new empire. Clapperton was told of their confederation in detail when he passed through their still independent territory in 1826.¹²⁵ Neither Nupe nor Bornu was kept within the Fulani fold. Bornu and Sokoto had reached an entente when Clapperton was first there,¹²⁶ but by his second visit they were at war and the bitterest of enemies.

On the subject of commerce, Denham and Clapperton made quite detailed reports. Denham noted in Bornu what he regarded as the beginning of new prosperity a short time before his arrival in 1823. He reported:

The Bashaw of Tripoli . . . obtained slaves almost exclusively through the medium of the sheikh's territory, which, since he had held the reins of government, was sufficiently safe for travellers, to induce merchants with large capitals for this country to proceed by way of Bornou to Soudan [Hausa]. The numbers of kafilas [Ar. qafila -- caravan] between that country and Fezzan had, within the last five years, greatly exceeded any former period; and in an equal proportion did the respectability of those traders who now accompanied them exceed that of the merchants previously in the habit of passing through Bornou.¹²⁷

It is difficult to judge how far back in time to assume that Denham's "any former period" should extend. He seems to be merely passing on rumors gleaned from the Fezzan merchants with whom he traveled. The statement makes most sense if we assume it to span only the trading careers of the persons with whom he spoke, i.e., not more than twenty years. He cannot have had any basis for estimating the numbers of caravans passing between Bornu and Fezzan in previous centuries, particularly since he was not very well read on the subject. What he

124. Palmer, "Raudthat ul-Afkari," 272.

125. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 124-125.

126. Ibid., 95.

127. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Denham, 189.

actually observed was undoubtedly the renaissance of commerce following its near death during the two decades of turmoil.

Denham reported that both Sheikh al-Kanemy and Sarkin Musulmi Bello were encouraging trade and doing their best to keep the roads safe.¹²⁸ Both must have known well the needs and preferences of traders, since both reputedly had engaged in trade themselves. Al-Kanemy is known to have made his start in life as a trader. It is less well known that Bello also participated in commerce, forgetfulness being encouraged by the Fulani contempt for trade. The Sokoto historian Hajji Sa'id said only:

. . . He spent from his own earnings and did not spend from the public Treasury. He had already said to his father at the start of their Holy War -- "Shaikh, lawful resources are lacking, and it is essential that you should spend for necessary expenses from this money; but, as for myself, I will earn my own living as I am a young man." He was apprenticed to a craft, by means of which he became independent of the Treasury.¹²⁹

Smith says, more explicitly, ". . . Sultan Bello (Shehu's son) is said to have subsisted his household mainly through trade and there are certain traditions about this."¹³⁰

All of Denham and Clapperton's remarks point to Hausaland (or the Soudan, as they call it) as the main commercial attraction, even for merchants coming first to Bornu. Denham writes that the Moors bought chiefly slaves in Bornu, "but Bornu is scarcely anything more than a rendezvous for kafilas from Soudan."¹³¹ Some of the merchants with whom Denham and Clapperton came from Murzuk passed on to Hausaland after they had sojourned briefly in Bornu.¹³² Denham and Clapperton's official escort, a merchant and powerful political figure in Fezzan named Abu Bakr ibn Khalum, or Boo Khaloom as Denham wrote it, also wanted to go on to Hausaland, "to better sell his merchandise."¹³³

Denham found, as had Horneman, that two large caravans of several stages each still left Murzuk annually at the end of the rainy season, one for Agades and another for Bornu. Most of the merchants of each passed on to Hausaland, and some ventured beyond to Nupe or to the west. The caravan to Agades met with merchants from Ghadames at Ghat, and they followed the same route on to Agades. There they met with the Agades merchants coming from Bilma with the annual caravan of salt. All proceeded to the cities of Hausaland.

There they found a land divided. Some of the old cities were under siege or in revolt and could not be visited. In rivalry with, or in place of them new centers had sprung up, under the guidance of the Fulani. When Clapperton passed through Hausaland, Kano was

128. *Ibid.*, 329 and 179 respectively.

129. Hodgkin, *Perspectives*, 220.

130. Personal communication, April 1967.

131. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, *Narrative*, Denham, 330.

132. *Ibid.*, 278.

133. *Ibid.*, 75.

evidently the only one of the old trading centers which was stable enough to accommodate the caravan with which he traveled. On the way to Kano they stopped to trade at Hadeija and Katagum, then within the eastern boundary of Kano emirate. These had been and remained entrepôts between Kano and Bornu.

From there they passed on to Kano city. Clapperton was disappointed at the size of the city, whose indigenous population he estimated at 30,000-40,000 people.¹³⁴ However, he noted that in the dry season people came in crowds from all parts of Africa, "from the Mediterranean, the Mountains of the Moon, and from Sennar and Ashantee."¹³⁵

Clapperton's disappointment on seeing Kano for the first time should not unduly influence our estimate of its commercial importance. The explorers of the Sudan were almost invariably disappointed at the sight of cities which had been described to them as great centers of trade. The most noted example is Caillie's disappointment on seeing Timbuctu for the first time. Experienced travelers soon discovered that even the most famous trading cities tended to be limited in size by European standards. Thus Laing wrote in 1825 of Timbuctu that its trade and cosmopolitan character met his every expectation, but he was surprised to find it only four miles in circumference.¹³⁶ By contrast, the walls of Kano were some thirteen English miles in circumference (although much of the enclosure was taken up by gardens).¹³⁷

In every respect except appearance Kano fulfilled Clapperton's expectations. He commented that the market was the best regulated in all of Africa, and that it was filled seven days a week from sunrise to sunset.¹³⁸ By contrast, the main market in Bornu, that of Angornou (near the now abandoned capital of the Maghumi Mais), convened only

134. Ibid., 49.

135. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, 49-50.

136. Laing to Bathurst, in Bovill, Missions, I.

137. Raymond Mauny has studied all the major cities of the Sudan and concluded that the greatest of them ranged from 25,000 to 75,000 inhabitants. "Un Tableau Géographique de l'Ouest Africain au Moyen Age," Memoires de l'Institut Français de l'Afrique Noire, 61 (1961), 497 ff. He estimated that only Gao and Kano attained a population of 75,000 both in the sixteenth century. Timbuktu, he declared never to have exceeded 25,000 inhabitants. His estimates for Kano and Gao are dubious, since they both rest on the assumption that these cities once filled more of their walled enclosures than they did in the nineteenth century. There are no apparent grounds for this assumption. An equally logical explanation is that Kano's (and also Katsina's and Zaria's) walls were larger than the living space needed, in order to make room for more cropland, not more people. The Hausa cities were surrounded by fertile land which could support an enemy army for a much longer time than the land around Timbuktu. Therefore the inhabitants inside had to have proportionately more food in case of an extended siege. The population of all the sudanese cities was limited by the fact that there were no sanitation facilities, so as soon as the rains came they became exceedingly unhealthy. Thus, there is no reason to believe that the population ever exceeded 30,000 or 40,000, which Clapperton and later Barth estimated for it.

138. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, 51.

once a week. Denham estimated that on that day eighty to one hundred thousand people attended it.¹³⁹ A similar number might be assumed to have attended the Kano market, although the number may have been slightly smaller since the market was held every day. The Kano market was apparently now inaccessible to Nupe, however. All the merchants and merchandise which Clapperton enumerated came either from North Africa or from the western route.

Between Kano and Sokoto there was no major town at which Clapperton could stop. He skirted south of Katsina about thirty miles, and just south of "Zirmee" (Zurmi, the capital of Zamfara). He noticed many local inhabitants going into the city to market, but it was apparently no longer a major rendezvous for foreign traders. Sarkin Musulmi Bello sent Clapperton an escort of 150 mounted men for the trip from Kano to Sokoto, whereas seventy men had been considered sufficient to defend the party on the road between Murzuk and Bornu. The dangers in Hausaland came from armies, rather than marauding bands, which was at least a difference in degree, if not in kind. The caravan stopped only in small villages, which were populated almost entirely by Fulani. This must have limited the route greatly, for Hausa far outnumbered Fulani in the countryside as a whole. When the caravan passed Zamfara, it began a two-day forced march of seventy miles to get past the Gobir army before it had time to seek them out. They had to march past Zamfara and Gobir, and cross to the west only 100 miles south of the capital of Gobir, Alkalawa. Their caravan made the journey without incident, but two subsequent caravans were devastated in the same area by Gobir and Zamfara troops.

Clapperton found Sokoto the most populous town in central Africa, and rapidly growing. From the description he gave of its commerce, it appeared to have attracted some of the trade which previously passed through Yauri, Kebbi, Zamfara and Katsina. Here the routes from Nupe and Gwonja now converged with those from the north. Access to the southern and western routes was comparatively limited, if we may judge by the warning Bello gave Clapperton. Clapperton was not allowed to proceed to Yauri or Nupe as he so ardently desired, ostensibly because of the dangers of the road.¹⁴⁰ Yet while Clapperton was away, Denham met with a merchant who had crossed the desert with them, who said that he had gone on to Kano and from there with four or five Arabs to Nupe and Yauri, where he had stayed some time.¹⁴¹ That report certainly does not suggest that there was great danger on the roads.

On the other hand, the man and his traveling companions may well have been sharifs, i.e., descendents of the Prophet. As such, to shed their blood would have been considered shedding the blood of the Prophet, and their goods were considered sacred as well.¹⁴² This observance is reported by Lucas before the Jihad. Both the Habe and the jihadists considered themselves Muslims, and respected this tradition. Sharifs of all complexions were evidently quite numerous in North and West Africa, and a large proportion of the mercantile community was

139. Ibid., 80.

140. Ibid., 90-96.

141. Ibid., Denham, 278.

142. Proceedings of the Association, I, 51, 103-104.

made up of persons thus protected. Lander's travels showed that even avowedly pagan kingdoms respected sharifs as specially sanctified.

The only reason that this consideration has been invoked here even though Denham made no mention of there being sharifs is that there is good reason to believe that the territory along the Niger was unsafe for most travelers. Three years later, when Clapperton came up from the coast through that area, he found no communication between hostile Habe and Nupe there, and the Fulani at Sokoto.¹⁴³ Even if Bello had been able to forward Clapperton to the Niger, he would probably have had to provide a sizeable escort to do so. When added to the fact that he was afraid that Clapperton might use the renowned sea power of the English to conspire with his enemies instead of helping him, this gave Bello good reason to refuse the request in any case.¹⁴⁴

On his return from Sokoto to Bornu, Clapperton visited the third major market city of Hausaland, Katsina. He found there two markets, one in the north and one in the south. The northern market was frequented by Tuareg who exchanged salt for locally grown grain.¹⁴⁵ The southern market accommodated merchants from Ghadames and Tuat, who exchanged goods from North Africa for cowries brought up from the coast. It was apparently only because of the cowries that these merchants came there. Clapperton said that they took the cowries to Kano to buy Kano cloth. A good part of the North Africans' profit came from manipulating local market conditions, and this was obviously what they were doing. Cowries must have been cheaper in Katsina than they were in Kano, or there would have been no point to the transaction. This was probably the result of a decline in the commerce of Katsina, since the routes feeding it and the state itself were constantly harassed by the Habe Katsinawa based at Maradi.

Clapperton did not provide a very detailed account of the Katsina market, so it is difficult to estimate how seriously it had been affected at that time. His party was ambushed by Gobir forces while en route to Katsina from Sokoto, and he arrived there in a very desperate condition. Many of the men of his group were killed outright or lost in the bush to die of thirst. It was this type of experience which led to the eventual decline of Katsina. Even if deterioration were not marked in Clapperton's time, it was certainly incipient.

The itineraries collected by Bowdich in 1817 and Dupuis in 1820 from Hausa and North African merchants in Ashanti throw some light on the state of trade from that point of view. They are limited, however, as neither of the authors stated explicitly how recently their informants had been in Hausaland. Most of the informants were permanent residents at the Ashanti court, and might not have been east since their youth. The majority of the itineraries can be dated from internal evidence to before the jihad. Two of Bowdich's itineraries and one of Dupuis' reflect more recent acquaintance, so these only will be considered.¹⁴⁶ Incidentally, this lack of currently traveling

143. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 76 ff.

144. Bello had received a total of three letters from respected sources telling him that the English planned to come up the Niger and conquer all of the Sudan, as they had India. Ibid., 197, 238.

145. Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, Narrative, Clapperton, 121.

146. Bowdich, Mission, 196 ff.; Dupuis, Journal, Appendix 10, cxxxi-cxxiv.

Hausa merchants at Kumasi should not be considered proof that trade was slow. It was also due to the fact that Ashanti merchants themselves normally carried their produce north to the markets of Gwonja and Dagomba.

The itineraries through Hausaland which Bowdich collected reveal that merchants traveled through both Fulani-controlled territory and Habe-controlled territory, though usually not on the same circuit. The main route to Hausa arched far north of Ashanti, through Salaga and Yendi to "Matchaquawdie" (Matiakouali?) and the cities of "Gooroomaa" (Gurma) on the Niger. Two days (about 40-50 miles) beyond the Niger one entered the state of "Ganhadi," which I am unable to identify with certainty.¹⁴⁷ It probably refers to the Gimbana, who were a people, not a state. They inhabited the market town of Jega, but were driven out by the Fulani.¹⁴⁸ One of the three large towns which Bowdich said belonged to that "state" can be identified as Dogondaji (Bowdich, "Dognodaghi"), about eighteen miles south of Jega. From "Ganhadi" the route branched into three, one route going northward fifteen days (about 300 miles) to "Houssa"; a second to Katsina (Bowdich, "Katinnee") via Kwatarkwashi; and a third through Fulani country (probably Sokoto) to the kingdom of "Kallagher." The latter surely refers to the Kel Hagggar, the Tuareg of the Hagggar oasis, near Ghat. It indicates that if one wanted to buy their products, one went to Fulani territory, undoubtedly to the market at Sokoto. The informant mentioned frequent war between the Fulani and Katsina, but implied that Katsina had not yet fallen. If that was the case, then it was ten years since he had last been there.

Bowdich also described an itinerary lying south of the Gurma route, passing through Wawa, Yauri, Zamfara, Gobir, Katsina, Daura, Kano, Hadeija and Nguru to Bornu. Unfortunately, it predated the jihad, and must have been the grand tour of the old days.

Of the Hausa itineraries in Dupuis' appendices, only one, Number 10, was contemporary. It was provided by "a native of that country [Katsina], but recently arrived at Coomassy on a trading speculation from the former city . . ."¹⁴⁹ It can be followed back from Katsina through Ruma (Dupuis, "Rouma") and Moriki (Dupuis, "Mariki") to Bakura (Dupuis, "Bokory") on the upper reaches of the Sokoto River. From there the man appears to have followed the river route to Sokoto (Dupuis, "Saghara") and Silame (Dupuis, "Sala"), though these and all subsequent identifications are uncertain.¹⁵⁰ The absence of familiar

147. It is some comfort to know that Dupuis insisted that the Moors of Ashanti had never heard of it three years later when he was there. Some of the confusion with the names on the itineraries of both Bowdich and Dupuis stems from the fact that they were usually transliterations of Arabic documents, rather than phonetic spellings, and the Arabic was corrupt.

148. E. W. Bovill, "Jega Market," *Journal of the African Society*.

149. Dupuis, *Journal*, Pt. II, cxxxiii.

150. Dupuis: Kalabaina, the river Ghulbi, Cabi, Kooka, Dajy, Deby, Kotobo, Fougha, Doua, Dosyrouga, Beledy, Redaba, the Koara, Todo, Rougha, Maury, Alomoan, Sameya, Dabakou, Komosy, Lagamana, Dawa, Alomagho, Atkali, Daghabo, Caya, Dansareka, Fadeseka, Ghogha, Togho, Yanboti, Kodeba, Yarmesy, Yanka, Dahegha, Fadaly, Balagho, Tady, Magho, Kokojo, Todoge, Dajy, the Ghulby, Baki, Sakogho, Cardosi, to Yandi. Perhaps a reader may be able to suggest other identifications.

towns on this route would suggest that he came, like Clapperton, through small Fulani villages rather than the main towns. Even the ferry where he crossed the Niger cannot be identified, although the name which Dupuis wrongly transliterated as "Kotobo" may well refer to the small village of Kwakwaba (Kokobo, historically). In that case, he probably crossed near there, for it is less than a day from the Niger.

The Fulani evidently were in the process of building up a network of trade routes to replace the old ones, which had become impassable for them. In order to be able to depend on villages for lodging and food along the way, they had to stop in Fulani villages. Where there were no towns to accommodate them, they sent out colonies. Migrant Fulani penetrated throughout the south and west into areas which had never been under Hausa rule. By 1833, when Lander was descending the Niger, they had founded Jebba and Raba to replace the old ferry at Rakah.¹⁵¹ They had also founded Ilorin, in the heart of Oyo country, and it was draining off commerce and population from the capital, Katungu. Near the confluence of the Niger and the Benue, the Fulani had infiltrated, and then taken the capital of the Igbira state of Panda or Fundah.

This penetration should not be regarded as the product of a Napoleonic grand design. Rather, it could be compared to the expansion of Europe in its haphazard character. The initiative of local rulers, small groups, and individuals on the fringes of the empire had more effect than the government at Sokoto. Yet, when individuals were insulted, or local rulers needed help, they could call on their kinsmen at Sokoto to supply them with cavalry and rifles. Since the old structures were breaking down, a large number of people were forced to gravitate toward the areas of greatest opportunity. They tended to congregate in commercial centers and around military strongmen.

Meanwhile, many of the old centers of trade began a slow death. Katsina was one of the cities, whose decline has already been mentioned. Its new rulers simply were not able to protect it adequately. The attacking Habe forces were not organized until after Shehu Uthman's death in 1818, however, so Katsina's preeminence had only begun to be affected when Clapperton was there. In Bowdich's and Dupuis' itineraries, it was still the most prominent entrepot.

The commercial picture in the land that was still held by Habe was probably better than that of Fulani areas, until nearly the end of our period. Clapperton's second journey offers an invaluable insight into the commerce which skirted Fulani territory to frequent Habe cities. The thousand-member Hausa caravan which he joined was on its way from Ashanti to Bornu through a series of villages and previously little frequented towns lying south of effective Fulani authority. Clapperton met the caravan at Kiama in Borgu, on the right bank of the Niger, a traditional and still flourishing entrepot on the Gwonja-Bornu route. Thereafter, however, the route was all new. Instead of turning north to cross the river at Bussa or Yauri, they cut south and crossed into Nupe at a little village called Comie.¹⁵² Here

151. Richard Lemon Lander, The Niger Journal of Richard and John Lander, Robin Hallett, ed. (New York, 1965), 91-92.

152. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 89.

they met another caravan going the other way, toward Gwonja.¹⁵³ They planned to proceed to Kulfu in Nupe, less than a day away, but heard that a Fulani army was there and so waited for it to retire.¹⁵⁴

Kulfu had been an entrepot for the north-south traffic before the jihad, and now had attracted much of the east-west trade as well. Clapperton found there a caravan from Bornu on its way west and one from Yoruba which was headed for Borgu.¹⁵⁵ In the market were traders from Yoruba, Kebbi, Yauri, Borgu, Zamfara, and Bornu (all hostile to Sokoto), as well as from Sokoto and "Hausa." He met merchants from Yauri (just a day to the north), who said that Dahomey merchants brought European goods to Hausa, Yauri and Nupe.¹⁵⁶ Others told him that the people of Benin, Ijebu and southern Nupe used to come there before the civil war broke out.¹⁵⁷

Clapperton himself seemed very confused about exactly what was going on in the country. He knew that Kulfu was nominally subject to the Fulani, and that they passed on their tolls to a Fulani puppet, but he failed to appreciate that the Sokoto regime had little or no authority there. He found traders there from both Sokoto and anti-Sokoto areas, so he must have assumed that traders were not affected by the hostilities.¹⁵⁸ At least he was surprised when told by the caravan leader that he must say that he was going to Bornu, and not Kano.

But he soon discovered the depth of the hostilities. To visit the supposed Fulani overlord of Kulfu, he had to be spirited off by night with two escorts on fast horses.¹⁵⁹ Later, when he finally left the caravan in the Habe-controlled portion of Zaria, he had to be forwarded into the Fulani-controlled portion through a wooded no-man's-land with only foot escorts.¹⁶⁰ The caravan remained in Habe-controlled territory, and went on to Bornu, which was then involved in war with Sokoto.

At this time, in 1826, it is evident that the Habe-controlled areas were engaged in considerably more commerce than was the Sokoto empire. Nearly all the indigenous traders which Clapperton met were trading with Sokoto's enemies, and they readily denounced the Fulani as rapacious plunderers.

When Clapperton arrived in Kano he found even the North African merchants very unhappy with Bello, because the war with Bornu had brought their trade to a standstill.¹⁶¹ Bornu had been the only road open to Fezzan merchants for some years, because the Tuareg of Agades, who controlled the Air-Ghat-Ghadames route, allowed only Ghadames

153. *Ibid.*, 110.

154. *Ibid.*, 118.

155. *Ibid.*, 129.

156. *Ibid.*, 123.

157. *Ibid.*, 160.

158. The traders from Sokoto might have been Habe, trading on their own with small capital, and able to pass in and out of Fulani areas as if they were peasants.

159. Clapperton, *Second Expedition*, 124-125.

160. *Ibid.*, 157-158.

161. *Ibid.*, 169.

merchants to pass.¹⁶² Even the far western route from Morocco to Timbuktu, which was dangerous and circuitous at any time, was reported completely closed at this time.¹⁶³ It was undoubtedly this isolation of Sokoto politically and commercially on all sides which was responsible for the serious inflation which Clapperton found there.

By the end of our period, however, the Fulani were beginning to recover. As Nupe and Oyo began to disintegrate politically, the Fulani penetrated more deeply into their territory. In the south-east of the Hausa states, which had always been a pagan area used by the Hausa only for slave-raiding, new avenues of commerce were being developed. As Lander reached Ibo territory just above the Niger Delta, he heard that Sheikh al-Kanemy had invited traders to his domains and that the roads were open all the way.¹⁶⁴ This road must have passed through Adamawa or Bauchi, two new states, nominally subject to the Sokoto regime, but, in fact, largely independent.

In summary, at the end of our period, in 1833, we find that the Fulani-Habe dichotomy brought about by the jihad was fully spelled out in commercial patterns in the 1820's and 1830's. The Fulani were beginning to develop a new commercial network extending into all of what is today Nigeria, as well as to the east, west, and north. It grew out of a combination of diplomacy, infiltration and conquest, and had to contend with concerted opposition of neighbors on all sides.

The Habe traders, who were the great majority of the indigenous merchants, continued their trade, but with their exiled brethren rather than with the new masters of Hausaland. Sheikh al-Kanemy of Bornu, the second great power in the central Sudan, actively encouraged African traders to frequent his domains instead of Sokoto's.¹⁶⁵ For a brief period in the late twenties, he and his lesser allies brought about the near total stoppage of Sokoto's foreign commerce. We know from later reports, however, that some of the Hausa cities under Fulani administration by the middle of the nineteenth century had recovered their commercial importance.

Denham and Clapperton had noted enthusiasm on the part of trans-Saharan merchants for the new regime and its improved legal protection for the period of about 1818 to 1823. Between 1804 and that time, and again in the late twenties, however, the commercial picture in Hausaland was one of severe disruption and gradual relocation. Caravans of traders on both sides of the quarrel traveled like guerilla bands instead of cosmopolitan urban residents. By 1833, the commerce of central Hausaland certainly had not regained the eclat of its pre-jihad days, nor probably its prosperity.

As to the general nature of trade, two conclusions are necessary. First, by the end of the eighteenth century it was already inappropriate to call the cities of Hausaland "termini" for the trans-

162. *Ibid.*

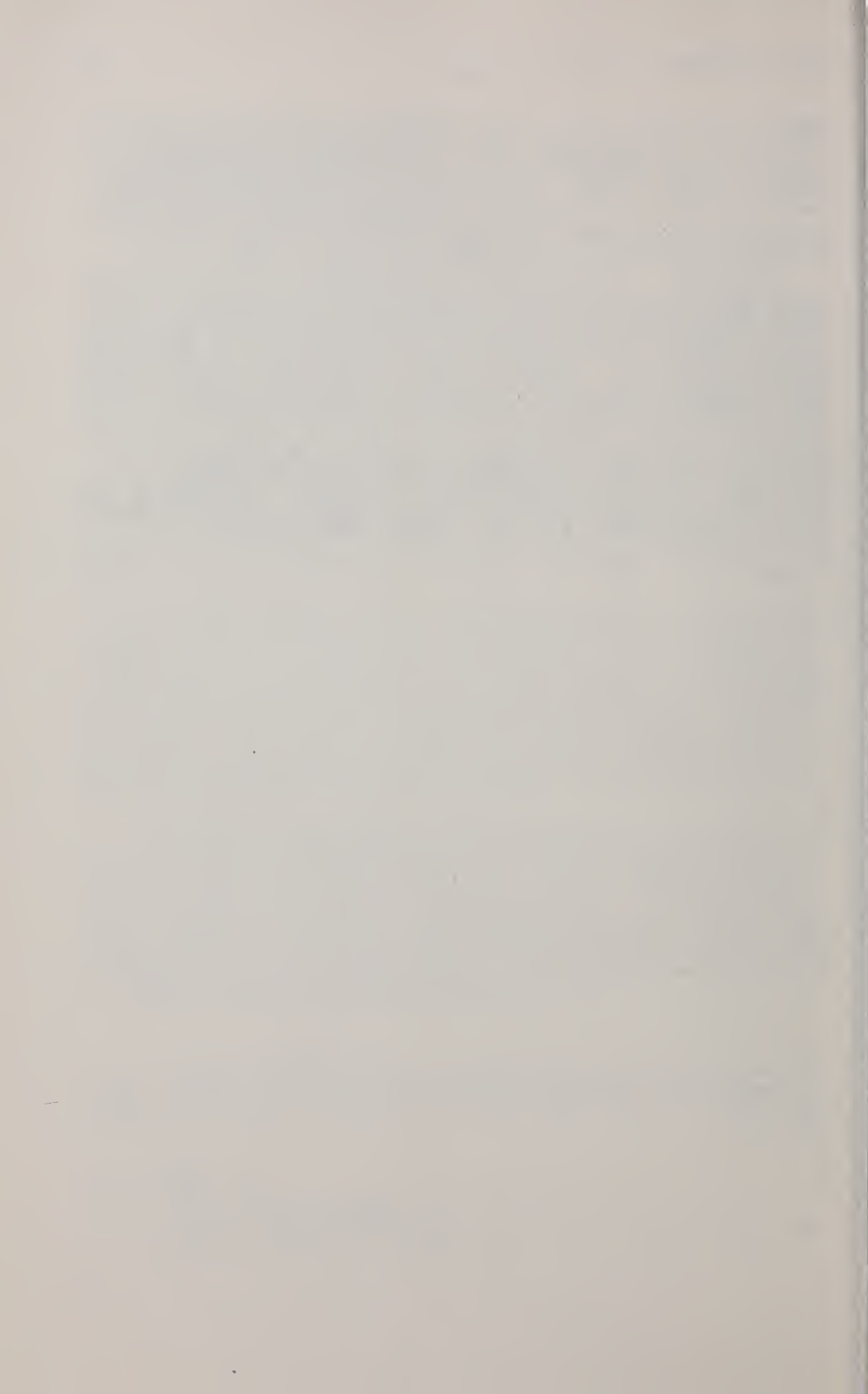
163. *Ibid.*, 202.

164. Lander, *Niger Journal*, 228.

165. He personally had sent the message to Panda saying that he had opened roads to his domains.

Saharan trade, especially if that implied an attempt to account for their commercial importance solely in terms of the trans-Saharan trade. They actually lay in what Bello termed the "middle sudan," not in the "upper sudan" in which all of the famous medieval termini had been located. The commercial importance of Hausa cities derived rather from the intersection of three main axes of trade, each of which was important in its own right.

Secondly, the availability of the specialized products of each region was the primary object of commerce, not profit per se. Hence, increased volume on one route could not substitute for the closing of another. Each of the routes was important to Hausa states themselves, and to the traders who frequented their markets, for its own particular commodities. This also explains the resilience of trade in Hausaland. Wherever and whenever there was not a seige actually in progress, goods passed from hand to hand. They were sought out from far places by men who prided themselves on their professional skill in procuring goods, either for their own use, or for their lord's. The state supported and encouraged them, so that where there was a strong state, trade usually flourished. However, when the land was divided against itself, rivalry and racial hatred broke down this system.



CHAPTER 7

THE NORTH AFRICAN TRADING COMMUNITY IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY CENTRAL SUDAN

Louis Brenner

Virtually every European traveler to the Central Sudan in the nineteenth century remarked on the excessive political influence there of North African merchants.¹ This was true in large capitals as well as small. In Sokoto Hugh Clapperton found that his best entry to Muhammad Bello was via Muhammad Gumsu, "the chief of the Arabs." Clapperton had been advised by merchants in Kano to offer Gumsu "a handsome present, and to endeavor by all means to keep him in good humour, on account of his great influence."² The British traveler most probably received this advice from his chief contact in Kano, another Arab by the name of Hat Salah, to whom he had been recommended by Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi, Shehu of Bornu.³ Clapperton's traveling companion and guide during most of his journey in Hausaland was another Arab merchant, Muhammad al-Wardi, from the Fezzan. Hat Salah and al-Wardi accompanied Clapperton when he visited the Amir of Kano.

There seems to have been a "Chief of the Arabs" in most capitals. In Katsina, Clapperton described one "Hadje Ahmed Ben Massoud" with the same title.⁴ Some thirty years later, Henry Barth was put to great inconvenience by a Katsina official bearing the title Sarkin Turawa, "Chief of the Whites," whose duty it was to oversee the activities of North African merchants in the town.⁵ Whether or not those individuals whom Clapperton called "Chiefs of the Arabs" were also government officials is not clear, but it is possible that they were. Gustav Nachtigal noted that in Kukawa there were two men who served as representatives of North African merchants: Muhammad al-

1. Several European travelers are quoted extensively in this paper. As an aid to the reader, the dates when they were in North and West Africa are as follows: Lyon, 1818-1820; Denham and Clapperton, 1822-1824; Clapperton's second journey, with Lander, 1826-1827; Richardson, 1845-1846 and 1850-1851; Barth, 1849-1855; Nachtigal, 1867-1874; Monteil, 1891-1892.
2. E. W. Bovill, ed., Missions to the Niger, Vols. II, III, IV: Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the Years 1822, 1823, and 1824, by Dixon Denham, Hugh Clapperton, and Walter Oudney (Cambridge, 1964-1966) [hereafter DCO], 680.
3. DCO, 422, 642.
4. Ibid., 707.
5. Henry Barth, Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa (London, 1965), I, 455.

Titiwi, a Fezzani, and Bu Alaq, an Awlad Sulaiman Arab.⁶ Bu Alaq had been made a member of the Bornu royal court. Barth mentions both men in his description of Kukawa, but does not suggest any official political role for either.⁷ This may be because the functions of "Chief of the Arabs" during the period of his visit had been assumed by the all-powerful vizier of Bornu, al-Hajj Bashir. By the last decade of the century, the office was held in Kukawa by one Sharif Shassimi, a man of extensive influence.⁸

The one important capital of the Central Sudan which may not have appointed an alien official to handle the affairs of North African merchants was Kano. Clapperton does not call Hat Salah "Chief of the Arabs." Barth on his visits to Kano retained different agents to handle his affairs and to accompany him to visit the Amir. One of these agents happened to be a son of Hat Salah named Bawu, but his services proved unacceptable.⁹ Another way in which Kano seems to differ from its neighbors is that, according to Clapperton, the Amir did "not usually admit Arab merchants into his presence."¹⁰ Clapperton notes that on the occasion of his royal audience, al-Wardi was "specially favored" in being allowed to accompany him. Clapperton's comment leads to some confusion, because he was also accompanied by Hat Salah, about whose presence at court he made no remark. Barth was also accompanied on his visits to the Amir of Kano by Bawu and other merchants resident in Kano. Perhaps Clapperton intended to say that the Amir did not allow visits from itinerant Arab merchants. If so, this was a singular restriction in the Central Sudan, where the predominant pattern was to encourage visits by all North African merchants, not only to the markets but to the courts of Sudanese capitals. It was only when merchants were welcomed at court that they could insert themselves into local politics and gain the kind of influence which Muhammad al-Titiwi or Sharif Shassimi enjoyed at Kukawa, or Muhammad Gumsu at Sokoto. In Katagum, Clapperton met a Tripoli merchant named Hamedu who was reputed to be extremely wealthy and was considered "second only to the governor" in political power.¹¹

The extent to which Arab merchants could gain political influence can be seen in the example of Sharif al-Fasi of Zinder. He was the agent in Zinder of Shehu Umar of Bornu. Exactly how the Sharif acquired this post is not known; he was a native of Fez, and had lived in Algiers and fought with Abd al-Qadir against the French. He probably reached Bornu in the course of trading activities and was much respected there for his learning and piety. Not only was the Sharif the local representative and "spy" for the Shehu in Zinder, but he also was the agent of all North African merchants there.¹² Indeed, according to James Richardson, "the Shereef is said to be the only person who has any money in Zinder. This man monopolises all the power and all the money."¹³

6. Gustav Nachtigal, Sahara und Sudan (Berlin, 1879), I, 575, 580-581.

7. Barth, Travels, II, 77, 639.

8. P. L. Monteil, De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Lac Tchad (Paris, n.d.), 314.

9. Barth, Travels, I, 490 ff.

10. DCO, 644.

11. Ibid., 626.

12. James Richardson, Narrative of a Mission to Central Africa (London, 1853), II, 182.

13. Ibid., II, 220.

To what can we attribute the prominent political role of North African, and especially Arab, merchants in West Africa? An important clue is to be found in the fact that Hausa and other indigenous merchants, whose contributions to commercial activity were significant, are almost never observed in similar political positions. Although European travelers observed numerous Arab, and occasional Tuareg or Teda, merchants attending the courts of Sudanese rulers, there is no mention of a West African merchant at court. As is often the case, there is an exception which proves the rule. P. L. Monteil met a man in Kano who originated from the eastern borders of Hausaland. This man, named Ali, began his career as a student of religious science and then decided to settle in Kano as a merchant. Success in business brought him some wealth and prominence, and he managed to befriend Muhammad Bello, future Amir of Kano, to whom he opened his home "as well as occasionally his treasury." When Bello became Amir, he elevated Ali to office in reward for his services and loyalty.¹⁴ This process of parlaying mercantile success into political office was not uncommon and may be a partial explanation for Arab prominence in the Sudan. Muhammad al-Mukni began his career as a merchant and commercial agent of the Pasha of Tripoli and subsequently became Bey of Fezzan. Al-Mukni's leading retainer was another merchant, Abu Bakr Bu Khallum.¹⁵ This is the same Bu Khallum who was charged by Yusuf Pasha of Tripoli with escorting Denham, Clapperton and Oudny to Bornu where he lost his life in a slave raid. His death was much grieved in the north, especially in Fezzan, where a merchant speculated to Denham about the impact of the tragedy:

What will now become of Fezzan? . . . Boo Khaloom was the cherisher of the whole population; he was young, rich, liberal and fearless: no one but him could speak of the bashaw [Pasha] in their favour; so great was his mind, that when a tax has been laid on Fezzan, which she could not pay, to prevent her children from flying to escape imprisonment, he would undertake to be the mediator, and, with the gifts of a sultan, instead of a merchant, in his hand, all furnished from his own coffers, always carried his point. It was written, however, that he was to die: -- God is great! And God's will be done.¹⁶

It is clear that Bu Khallum's prominence resulted from qualities other than wealth; and yet, without wealth it is doubtful if he could ever have won the Pasha to his position.

If wealth could be translated into political influence, the reverse also was true; political or social prominence often served as a letter of credit to launch men into mercantile careers. Barth mentioned that Abd al-Qadir, a deposed Sultan of Agades, had moved to Katsina and was involved in commercial transactions of large proportions.¹⁷ In Zinder, Richardson met Sidi Bou Baker, son of al-Hajj Sudani, one of al-Kanemi's companions in his rise to power in Bornu.¹⁸ The Sudani family had claim to a titled office in the Kukawa court, a

14. Monteil, *De Saint-Louis*, 272.

15. G. F. Lyon, *A Narrative of Travels in Northern Africa in the Years 1818, 19, and 20* (London, 1821), 164.

16. DCO, 503.

17. Barth, *Travels*, III, 563-564.

18. Richardson, *Narrative*, II, 246-247.

position which Bou Baker later attained; until that time, however, he engaged in trade. Having established that there was a connection in these states between wealth and political influence, we have not answered the question as to why the Arabs generally benefited in this arrangement and indigenous traders did not. One factor was certainly related to Islam. North African traders came from, or had visited, cities which were cultural centers of the Islamic world. Their presence at court thus lent prestige to its members; this was especially so when a merchant was also a scholar or a Sharif, as was often the case. But probably the most important factor in distinguishing among members of the merchant classes was the goods in which individuals traded.

Barth's observations on indigenous trade offer evidence about the distinctions among trade goods. In Baghirmi he encountered a group of Hausa,

slender, active fellows, accustomed to fatigue, and content with little profit, who were carrying on their heads, all the way from Kano to Bagirmi, small parcels of indigo-dyed shirts, and other commodities, in order to barter them for the fine asses of Dar-Fur.¹⁹

In western Bornu he met a group of "petty native traders" carrying cotton for sale in the market of Muniyo; another group was trading earthenware.²⁰ In western Hausaland Barth observed a caravan of traders carrying vegetable cakes called dodowa:

Three thousand of these cakes constitute an ass-load, and each of them in general is sold in Sokoto for five kurdi [cowries], having been bought on the spot for one uri [cowrie]; so that the profit, being not less than 500 per cent., makes this commerce attractive for poor people.²¹

In Gurma country he met a caravan of Mossi traders carrying cotton strips and kola nuts.²² Barth's observations are supported by those of Clapperton who stated that Hausa traders carried to Bornu tobacco, kola nuts, antimony, cotton cloth by the bolt or made into shirts or dresses. They returned with natron, salt, beads, and some items of Bornu clothing. Kanuri traders also carried similar goods along the same routes.²³ Indigenous traders, then, dealt primarily in goods which were marketed among the general population.

By contrast, north Africans imported into the Sudan various types of cloth and clothing worn by the wealthier classes, such as burnuses, kaftans, shawls, red caps, silk and linen cloth of European and Mediterranean manufacture. They also brought rugs and carpets and similar furnishings; horses were another important import.²⁴ This

19. Barth, Travels, II, 488.

20. Ibid., III, 44.

21. Ibid., 98.

22. Ibid., 207.

23. DCO, 615-616.

24. The nature of goods imported remained fairly consistent over the century. For example, compare Lyon, Narrative, 152 ff. and Nachtigal, Sahara, I, 698-700.

merchandise could be purchased only by men of some means. Barth states specifically that in Yola "striped Manchester, calico, cloth bernuses, [were] generally sold privately to the wealthier people."²⁵ Richardson concluded that the Fezzani Arabs sold their goods only to members of the ruling classes in Sudan. In Muniyo he noted that they sold a few items to "the Sultan and his chief officers";²⁶ in Zinder he said they sold all their goods on credit to the Sarki.²⁷ It is doubtful that Richardson's general conclusion is justified, however. Clapperton saw Ghadamsi and Tuati merchants in the Katsina market selling goods for cowries which were then carried to Kano in order to purchase the manufactures of that city.²⁸ And Nachtigal noted in Kukawa that whereas the North African merchants retained most of their goods to be sold from their residences, they also gave out goods on credit to agents who traveled into the countryside.²⁹ A perusal of the North African import lists will indicate that not all the items were expensive luxury goods, although it would appear that the majority were. North African merchants therefore marketed goods which were consumed by the wealthier inhabitants of the Sudan, that is, men of political prominence.

Not only were Arab traders distinguished from indigenous West Africans by the goods they sold, but also by the goods they bought: primarily slaves, ivory, and ostrich feathers. As Muhammad al-Tounsy observed early in the century, "It is only the wealthy merchants who are able to export this merchandise. Other products of petty commerce are the object of trade for people of more humble condition."³⁰ Of course, not all merchants engaged in trans-Saharan commerce were independently wealthy; but their activities were backed by the credits of stationary North African and European merchants and trading houses. Upon arrival in the Sudan they therefore had at their disposal the means to engage in sizeable transactions, and also the wherewithal to ease their way into favorable business deals through the judicious distribution of gifts. West African merchants were not backed by large capital investments and could not operate in the fashion of the North Africans.

Exchange of gifts was an integral part of trans-Saharan commerce. Richardson was told in Ghadames that in traveling to Sudan one is required to offer gifts to the various Tuareg chiefs of Ghat and Air as a kind of transit duty, but that the chiefs of Sudan "do not demand presents as a matter of right, leaving it to the good pleasure of the stranger."³¹ It is highly unlikely, however, that North Africans ever failed to offer gifts to the chiefs of the towns where they traded. The arrival and departure, as well as the freedom to trade, of the North African merchants were carefully controlled by Sudanese governments. We have already mentioned the Sarkin Turawa of Katsina, and the "Chiefs of the Arabs" in Sokoto and Kukawa, whose duties were to oversee the activities of these aliens. During the rule of al-

25. Barth, Travels, II, 190.

26. Richardson, Narrative, II, 309.

27. Ibid., 251-252.

28. DCO, 709.

29. Nachtigal, Sahara, I, 700.

30. Le Cheykh Mohammed ibn-Omar el-Tounsy, Voyage au Ouaday, trans. from the Arabic by Dr. Perron (Paris, 1851), 333.

31. James Richardson, Travels in the Great Desert of Sahara 1845 and 1846 (London, 1848), I, 175-176.

Kanemi in Bornu, he took a personal interest in trade regulations so that no caravan was "permitted to enter Kouka during [his] absence, nor dare the merchants offer any goods for sale till they had his permission."³² Information given to Lyon in Murzuk in 1819, at the time al-Kanemi had emerged as the de facto ruler of Bornu, indicates that merchants gravitated toward the centers of political power in the Sudan. "All the traders from Fezzan," he said, "carry [al-Kanemi] presents, and consider him a far greater man than his master [the Mail, who now lives in a very retired manner]."³³ Lyon also observed a social practice in Murzuk which is relevant to the Sudan: "The better class of the people, or those who have some property, are distinguished from the poor by being admitted to the Sultan's presence."³⁴

The possession of wealth, even if it was borrowed, afforded a man social prestige in the Sudan. Wealth, if properly managed, could be translated into political power, as in the case of the Kano merchant, Ali, and Bu Khallum, mentioned above. Luxury goods imported from North Africa were consumed by members of the Sudan ruling classes, who were the only individuals able to afford such purchases. Thus it seems natural that the Arabs should appear in Sudanic courts: they were wealthy and necessitated watching because of their political potential; and their prospective customers were all men of political prominence. It should be reiterated here that virtually no reference appears in all the nineteenth-century literature to Hausa, Kanuri, or other indigenous traders appearing at court. Presumably the movements and transactions of these merchants were also controlled, but apparently not directly by the court. As we have seen, indigenous traders generally possessed very little means and did not deal in luxury items. Their activities were confined to the markets, whereas the Arabs often conducted business privately in their residences.

Slaves, ostrich feathers, and ivory were the chief products exported northward from the Sudan in the nineteenth century. Very little evidence is available which indicates the way in which the latter two items were collected and brought to market.³⁵ Information about the slave trade, however, reveals that it was predominantly in the hands of the Sudanese ruling classes. Barth accompanied a Bornu slave raid led by al-Hajj Bashir, the vizier. The total booty was about 10,000 head of cattle, 3000 slaves captured plus a "sort of tribute" of 800 slaves taken from the territories of an allied chief. The vizier claimed one-third of the 3000 captives and all the "tribute"; no mention is made of the division of the cattle.³⁶ Certainly a share of the captives was reserved for the Shehu of Bornu. But even if the Shehu's portion were included among the slaves which the vizier

32. DCO, 377.

33. Lyon, Narrative, 128.

34. Ibid., 279-280.

35. The marketing of these products may have been controlled by the ruling classes. Richardson (Narrative, I, 90-91) witnessed the arrival in Murzuk of a Bornu caravan carrying 150 qantars of ivory of which sixty or seventy qantars were brought by one unnamed Arab merchant, and "forty were on account of the Vizier of Bornu," al-Hajj Bashir. Barth mentioned that in Baghirmi ivory was not sold in the market but privately in houses, perhaps an indication of marketing restrictions. Barth, Travels, II, 513-514.

36. Barth, Travels, II, 418.

claimed this would leave about 2000 captives to be divided among the sixty-five courtiers, royal slaves, and other chiefs who accompanied this expedition as well as among the 13,000 troops who Barth estimated were present.³⁷ It is not unwarranted to suggest that the chiefs and courtiers would claim more slaves than their troops, and that therefore very few slaves indeed passed into the hands of Bornu commoners. That the only booty which filtered down to the troops was "blind, lame or broken-horned cattle," is an opinion currently expressed in Bornu. Richardson observed a division of spoils in Zinder similar to that in Bornu. During slave raids, he said:

The lesser chiefs act an important part and each gets a share. A chief who fights under the Sarkee captures fifty slaves, and gives up to the Sarkee, twenty-five or thirty, keeping the rest for himself and people.

If a single undistinguished man captures five, the Sarkee gets two of the five; another captures two, the Sarkee gets one, and the captor one.³⁹

In his description of the commerce of Kano, Barth mentioned that only a small percentage of the profits derived from the slave trade went to the advantage of the common people of the city.⁴⁰

The North African demand for slaves and the Sudanese desire for luxury imports complemented one another in a firm system of inter-dependence. Al-Kanemi confided to Denham that "the Arabs who came [to Bornu] will have nothing else but slaves."⁴¹ As the century progressed, and European-imposed treaties in North Africa began to interrupt the trans-Saharan slave trade, ivory and ostrich feathers became increasingly important as exports. But these goods were destined for European markets, which tied the Sudan into a foreign economy which could not consistently absorb luxury imports. When European demand collapsed, the Sudan was left without alternate markets.⁴² The slave trade apparently had not been subject to such vicissitudes. North Africa and the Middle East, especially Constantinople, were constantly seeking slave imports; indeed, these areas did all in their power to expedite this trade. Slaves destined for Constantinople paid no transit duties in the Ottoman domains of Tripoli and the Fezzan. Slaves sold in North Africa paid only a minor duty, whereas "objects of legitimate commerce" paid 12 1/2 percent duty in both Fezzan and Tripoli.⁴³ Similar privileges were extended in parts of the Sudan. Arabs did not pay any duties in Zinder, although Tuareg and Sudanese traders did.⁴⁴ There is very little specific information about duty payments in Bornu, although Denham remarked that Arab merchants were "encouraged and treated with great liberality" there.⁴⁵ Barth

37. Ibid., 638-640.

38. Oral testimony collected in Bornu, 1966.

39. Richardson, Narrative, II, 231-232.

40. Barth, Travels, I, 515.

41. DCO, 533.

42. See C. W. Newbury, "North African and Western Sudan Trade in the Nineteenth Century: A Re-Evaluation," Journal of African History, VII, 2 (1966), 233-246.

43. Richardson, Narrative, I, 92.

44. Ibid., II, 194-195.

45. DCO, 767-768.

recorded that the sale of slaves in the Kano market was taxed, but this was probably true in all markets;⁴⁶ what is not known is how many slaves, if any, were sold privately outside the markets. The exchange of gifts at court may have served as a kind of informal duty in that presents were necessary in order to be allowed to trade.

The reciprocal interests of the North African merchants and the Sudanese rulers resulted in the solid entrenchment of the trans-Saharan trade, until European interference severed the relationship. Sudanese leaders required these imports, not only to pander to their own tastes, but also because they represented important assets to be distributed as gifts among loyal followers. North African clothing and furnishings were symbols of prestige because they were expensive luxury items. Generosity was considered one of the cardinal attributes of good leadership,⁴⁷ and members of all ranks in the ruling hierarchy were expected to reward loyal service with gifts. Similarly, men were installed into political offices with gifts of imported clothing. Barth observed the installation of a chief as a minor vassal to the Shehu of Bornu. "First he was dressed in an elephant shirt -- the large black shirt from Nufe [Nupe] -- over which a rich silk robe was thrown, and over all an Egyptian shawl."⁴⁸ Since slaves were the primary export in demand, when the treasuries fell low, a slave raid was launched in order to obtain new income. Barth rather bluntly stated that when "the coffers and slave-rooms of the great men [of Bornu] were empty; and, a new supply being wanted, from whence to obtain it was a question of minor importance."⁴⁹ Richardson was convinced that Sudanese rulers raided their own subjects: "The sultan of a province foments a quarrel with a town or village belonging to himself and then goes out and carries off all the people into slavery."⁵⁰

An almost constant pressure toward slave raiding existed because the customers of the North Africans were perpetually in debt. Usually, incoming merchants would hand over their goods on credit and then either engage agents to collect for them, or wait around themselves for payment. The credit network was vast and complex; Denham, Clapperton, and Barth all commented on their difficulties and successes in operating in this financial system, and their experiences reveal some insights into the system. However, only extensive research into North African sources will lay open the intricacies of trans-Saharan finance. The Europeans certainly became aware of the general difficulty of collecting debts. An Arab acquaintance of Clapperton found it impossible to leave Katagum being unable to collect from his numerous debtors.⁵¹ According to Richardson, Sarkin Zinder was in debt to one merchant for 1600 Maria-Theresa dollars, a sizeable sum in the Sudan; and this was not the Sarki's only debt.⁵² When al-Hajj Bashir was vizier in Bornu he took responsibility to see

46. Barth, Travels, I, 515; see also Clapperton's description of the Kano market, DCO, 651.

47. See Ronald Cohen, "Some Aspects of Institutionalized Exchange: A Kanuri Example," Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, V, 3 (1965), 353-369.

48. Barth, Travels, II, 359.

49. Ibid., 316-317.

50. Richardson, Narrative, II, 205.

51. DCO, 716.

52. Richardson, Narrative, II, 240.

that debts were paid, but after his death merchants found it difficult to collect until Shehu Abdurrahman intervened personally.⁵³ Later in the century, merchants frequented Bornu less and less as that country gained a reputation for being remiss in its financial responsibilities.⁵⁴

Bornu's deficiency in caring for her foreign merchants in the latter part of the century differs markedly from the policy which al-Kanemi had adopted earlier. Denham correctly analysed a growing interdependence between Tripoli and Bornu based on trade.

[Yusuf Pasha of Tripoli] obtained slaves almost exclusively through the medium of [al-Kanemi's] territory, which, since he has held the reins of government, was sufficiently safe for travellers, to induce merchants with large capitals for this country to proceed by way of Bornou to Soudan [Hausaland]. The numbers of kafilas between that country and Fezzan had, within the last five years, greatly exceeded any former period; and in equal proportion did the respectability of those traders who now accompanied them exceed that of the merchants previously in the habit of passing through Bornou.⁵⁵

Al-Kanemi conscientiously developed friendly relations with the north. He was born in Fezzan and had many connections there; his family owned property in Murzuk. As he rose to political prominence many of his friends and relatives from the Fezzan joined him in Bornu. Fezzani merchants, seeking favorable business arrangements also traveled to Bornu where they often assisted in military campaigns. Denham remarked that in the battle against Baghirmi which he witnessed, al-Kanemi's forces had been weakened by the absence of about thirty Arabs who had gone to Hausaland.⁵⁶ Some years earlier, in 1819, al-Kanemi had been defeated by Baghirmi during a battle in which his eldest son was killed; even in defeat he had praise for the Fezzani Arabs whose courage he considered worth special mention.⁵⁷

These political relationships between Bornu and its resident merchants were complemented by a rather shaky political alliance between Yusuf Pasha and al-Kanemi. On at least one occasion Yusuf sent troops from his domains to aid al-Kanemi in Bornu; this expedition was led by the Governor of Fezzan, Mustafa al-Ahmar, in 1821.⁵⁸ An earlier campaign was led by al-Mukni, al-Ahmar's predecessor in Fezzan. Considerable confusion surrounds this expedition. One source suggests that al-Mukni was invited to Bornu by al-Kanemi to aid in

53. Libya Government Archives [LGA], "Letter from the Wali of Tripoli to the Qa'imaqam of Fezzan," dated Sha'ban 1270 (29 April to May 1854).

54. Nachtigal, Sahara, I, 703.

55. DCO, 394.

56. Ibid., 449. The military value of the Arabs lay in their possession of firearms.

57. University of Ibadan MS 82/233, "Letter from al-Kanemi to his sisters Ruqayya and Fatima and his daughter Khadija," 10 July 1819. The defeat occurred in February 1819.

58. For a description of this expedition see DCO, 539-554, and Francis Rodd, "A Fezzani Military Expedition to Kanem and Bagirmi in 1821," Journal of the Royal African Society, XXXV (1936), 153-168.

disciplining recalcitrant subjects;⁵⁹ others, however, suggest that al-Mukni had perpetrated a slave raid in Kanem against the wishes of Bornu.⁶⁰ It is possible, although not at this point proven, that al-Kanemi allowed al-Mukni, in payment for his services, to raid certain of his enemies for slaves. There is no question that al-Ahmar's reward for assistance was captives both for himself and for Yusuf Pasha. There is also no question that this political alliance was closely connected with trade relations, because in September 1820 Yusuf wrote to al-Kanemi proclaiming their mutual friendship and promising to exempt him and his friends from all custom dues in Fezzan, "even if they bring loads by the ton."⁶¹ Even so, the alliance was never sound; when Denham arrived in Kukawa, Yusuf was detaining two of al-Kanemi's children in Fezzan. And during Denham's sojourn in Kukawa there were several alarms to the effect that Tripoli might invade Bornu.⁶²

Mercantile connections between North and West Africa were often employed as channels of political and diplomatic communications. Much of the diplomatic correspondence which crossed the Sahara concerned trade. B. G. Martin has published translations of a number of letters from the Tripoli archives, and several of these deal directly with trade.⁶³ Other unpublished correspondence further supports the contention that trade was a major subject of administrative correspondence, at least under the second Ottoman regime in Tripoli. The fear of Arab traders that Bornu was considering attacking Kano in the 1840's came to the attention of Ottoman officials who immediately took measures to discourage any campaign. The merchants, of course, were alarmed not only that warfare would interrupt trade, but also that they might lose their property in the fighting and looting.⁶⁴ Any report of political upheaval or change in leadership resulted in extensive efforts to determine the impact of these events on trade. In the 1850's when Shehu Umar of Bornu was deposed by his brother Abdurrahman, steps were taken in Tripoli to insure that trade relations remained favorable.⁶⁵ When Umar (who regained his throne from Abdurrahman) died in 1881, reports were dispatched northward by resident merchants concerning the government of his son, Abu Bakr, the new Shehu.⁶⁶

When Ottoman officials desired to obtain information about the Sudan, they often sent merchants on fact-finding missions. When the Wali of Tripoli wanted to cement relations with the Shehu Abdurrahman,

59. See B. G. Martin, "Five Letters from the Tripoli Archives," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, II, 3 (Dec. 1962), 358.
60. Lyon, Narrative, 124; Barth, Travels, III, 43.
61. Nigerian National Archives, Kaduna, 530/1917.
62. DCO, 394.
63. Martin, "Five Letters." Letter I concerns the desire of al-Hajj Bashir of Bornu to purchase firearms from Tripoli; Letters IV and V address the question of keeping the roads open and safe for caravan traffic.
64. LGA, "Letter from the Qa'imaqam of Fezzan, Hassan Pasha, to the Wali of Tripoli," 29 Dhu al-Qa'da 1262 (18 November 1846).
65. See Martin, "Five Letters," Letter IV; also LGA, "Letter from the Wali of Tripoli to the Qa'imaqam of Fezzan," Sha'ban 1270 (29 April to 27 May 1854).
66. LGA, "Letter from Mukhtar Hassan to Hajj Muhammad," 10 Sha'ban 1299 (27 June 1882). The sender and receiver of this letter were apparently traders.

the Qa'imaqam of Fezzan sent one Sharif Barkan to accomplish this.⁶⁷ Sharif Abdurrahman Barkan was a merchant who eventually established residence in Bornu and became influential in the Kukawa court. He apparently became involved in collecting a gift of wild animals to be sent to the Ottoman Sultan for his private zoo.⁶⁸ More important, because of his position in Bornu and his reputation in Fezzan, he became a leading diplomatic envoy between the two governments.⁶⁹ On another occasion, the Fezzani government sent al-Hajj Hussain al-Titiwi to Bornu to investigate suggestions that Bornu might voluntarily pay tribute to Constantinople.⁷⁰ Muhammad al-Titiwi has already been mentioned as a leading courtier in Bornu during Barth's and Nachtigal's visits. The Titiwi family was quite prominent in both the Fezzan and the Sudan. Muhammad's brother, Amin as-Sandug, was the treasurer of Fezzan;⁷¹ and later in the century Muhammad al-Hachaichi noted that Abdurrahman Titiwi was a leading figure in Murzuk.⁷²

The larger and more successful trading houses or trading families tended to spread their representatives and their influence throughout North Africa and the Sudan. In the Fezzan, besides the Titiwi's was the Ben Alua family, mentioned by Nachtigal, al-Hachaichi, and Monteil.⁷³ Various members of this family were also government officials in Murzuk, influential courtiers in Bornu, and successful traders. The head of the family, Muhammad b. Alua, had come to Fezzan from Aujila and had found success in trade and politics. He married a daughter of the well-regarded Bu Khallum, who was a protégé of both al-Mukni and Yusuf Pasha.⁷⁴ It may have been this marriage alliance which set the Ben Alua family on the road to success. We have also referred to the al-Wardi family of Fezzan, successful traders in Bornu from early in the century. Muhammad al-Wardi escorted Clapperton to Kano and Sokoto, and his son, Umar, provided Richardson with a great deal of information about Bornu when the explorer was in Zinder.⁷⁵

Perhaps the largest and most influential trading house was that headed by the El-Tseni family of Ghadames (variably spelled as Ettanee, Tini, and Ettence).⁷⁶ The trading connections of this family extended throughout Hausaland, to Timbuktu and also into North Africa and the various desert oases. Al-Hachaichi had occasion to enter into a business arrangement with a member of this family, El Hadj Ali Belkassem el-Tseni. Al-Hachaichi's description of the man reveals the manner in which his political and commercial connections were developed:

67. Martin, "Five Letters," 363.

68. See Martin, "Five Letters," 371-372. LGA, "Letter from Sharif Abdurrahman Barkan to the Qa'imaqam of Fezzan," 15 Jumada al-Ula 1286 (23 August 1869).

69. Information about Sharif Barkan was also obtained in an interview with his grandson, Sidi Abdurrahman Barkan of Tripoli, in 1966.

70. LGA, "Letter from the Qa'imaqam of Fezzan to the Wali of Tripoli," 12 Safar 1260 (3 March 1844).

71. Nachtigal, Sahara, I, 575.

72. Mohammed el-Hachaichi, Voyage au Pays Senoussia (Paris, 1912), 166.

73. Nachtigal, Sahara, I, 81 ff.; el-Hachaichi, Voyage, 158-160, 236; Monteil, De Saint-Louis, 427.

74. See above, p. 139.

75. Richardson, Narrative, II, 257.

76. Barth, Travels, III, 375; Richardson, Travels, I, 32, 232-233, 260; el-Hachaichi, Voyage, 27, 113-114.

Born in Ghat, where he grew up, descended from noble Tuareg on his mother's side, who is the maternal aunt of the Bey of Ghat, with whom she now lives, he has for many years pursued commercial activities in Ghadames and in this way gained considerable fame in the regions of the Sahara and the Sudan. Similarly he knows all the great traders in these countries and among the Tuareg chiefs.⁷⁷

It was probably from a member of the El-Tseni family that al-Hachaichi obtained his information about the distribution of Ghadames merchants in North and West Africa. This listing is quoted here at length because it indicates the extent and nature of Ghadamsi influence.

In Bornu there are six [merchants], among them Mohammed B. Mohammed B. Brahim, son-in-law of the Sultan of Bornu; in Tchad, two; in Zinder, six; in Beled Bou Chebir, four; in Ghat, 24; in Waday there is only one, Mohammed Sayah, who is a person enjoying great influence and who plays a role of minister to the sultan; in Kanem, two; in Murzuk, two; in Beled Damerghou, six among who is Shaikh Mohammed el-Bechir el Ouahchi, an important individual who enjoys great influence among the Ghadamsia; in Kano, 19 among whom are the Shaikh Mohammed Bou Zemala, a minister of the King of Kano; Ali ben Barka, a Negro slave of the trader Mohammed b. Brahim El-Tseni; and the traders Hamadou and Zaberma, freed slaves of El Hadj Ali b. Ahmed El-Tseni; in Nupe, three; in Adamawa, 4; in Zaria, 3; in Timbuktu, there are Hamou El-Belili; Abderrahman ben Kayari, Mohammed ben Ali ben Rechid, Bechir ben Ahmed El-Ghandji, Ahmed ben El-Hadj Brahim who is in the service of the El-Tseni family, and Harmou El-Mezghanni; in Sokoto, 4 . . . Finally, there are in Tunis 37 notable Ghadames traders who still today carry on an important trade with the Sudan via Tripoli.⁷⁸

At this stage of research it is not possible to know in any detail the manner in which North African merchants influenced day-to-day policy decisions in Sudanese courts. We have seen some examples of political influence being employed in order to encourage trade, which may have been always the overriding concern of all those involved. Most of the information presently available derives from European sources, and the impression gained from them is uniform: that Arab traders tried every device to hinder the introduction of European trade into their commercial territories. The Europeans concluded that the North Africans feared any competition would erode

77. El-Hachaichi, Voyage, 27.

78. Ibid., 220-222.

their trade and that their businesses would be ruined. Certainly this was an important consideration, but it was not the only one. Richardson was confronted at the Ghadames court by a leading member of the El-Tseni family who bluntly asked, "Why do the English go [to India] and eat up all the Mussulmans? Afterwards you will come here."⁷⁹ The same fear plagued al-Kanemi and Muhammad Bello.⁸⁰ Whatever the reasons, numerous European travelers remarked on the manner in which the Arab merchants upon occasion tried to interfere with possible future European trade relations. Clapperton on his first visit to Sokoto felt that he had been hindered from proceeding to Yauri by the influence of Arab traders upon Bello.⁸¹ Clapperton also attributed to Arab merchants his difficulties during his second visit to Sokoto, a view shared by his servant and companion, Richard Lander.⁸² We have mentioned Richardson's meeting with El-Tseni; Barth reported that he had no success in promoting a British trading agreement in Kukawa until a report came from Murzuk that the Turks might be planning to extend their authority southward.⁸³ Monteil was convinced that the MacIntosh mission to Bornu, sent by the Royal Niger Company, had been turned away through the influence of the Arabs upon Shehu Hashimi.⁸⁴

Although this paper has explored the close relationship which existed between North African merchants and Sudanese rulers, one should not conclude that the Arabs were always secure in their positions. Neither participation in the trans-Saharan trade nor membership in an important family guaranteed the success of a merchant. Bu Khallum's brother, Ali, caused considerable difficulty not only for Denham and Clapperton, but also for Muhammad Bello; the latter would not admit Ali to the Sokoto court.⁸⁵ When Lyon was in Murzuk word came from Yusuf Pasha that hostilities had erupted with Aujila. Al-Mukni was ordered to imprison all merchants from that town and to confiscate their property.⁸⁶ When Rabeh Zubair invaded Bornu in 1893, the Arab merchant community was unsure of what course to pursue to protect their lives and property. They decided to cooperate in a plan designed to save at least some of their goods. Half the merchants fled with Shehu Hashimi from Kukawa with their property; the other half remained to offer allegiance to Rabeh. Whatever goods were saved were to be divided among all survivors. Rabeh, however, took all. Later reports stated that his booty from those who remained in Kukawa was:

500 alkimbas, 4000 pieces of white cloth, 3800 lb. gunpowder, 160 rifles (no cartridges), 100 flint blunderbuses; from run-away Arabs, 1000 large tusks of ivory, 70,000 dollars, 250-100 lb. bales ostrich feathers, 1000 camels, 1000 cattle, 30,000 sheep and goats.⁸⁷

79. Richardson, Travels, I, 232-233.

80. Hugh Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa (London, 1829), I, 99.

81. DCO, 685.

82. Richard Lander, Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa (London, 1830), II, 23.

83. Barth, Travels, II, 235.

84. Monteil, De Saint-Louis, 314-315. See also, J. E. Flint, Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria (London, 1960), 171.

85. DCO, 683-684.

86. Lyon, Narrative, 198.

87. Sir Richmond Palmer, Gazetteer of Bornu Province (Lagos, 1929), 109.

In conclusion, it would seem that for the merchants the positive results of the trans-Saharan trade, both in its political and commercial aspects, far outweighed the negative. The trade served the interests of all parties connected with it. The evidence here presented suggests that the North African trading community and the ruling classes in both the Sudan and North Africa constituted a kind of unified community of interests in which the activities of all members tended to serve the needs of all members. Indeed, the impression is forthcoming that the Sudanese ruling classes were more oriented, culturally and socially, toward this international and cosmopolitan community than toward their own subjects.

CHAPTER 8

THE FIREARMS TRADE IN THE CENTRAL SUDAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Joseph P. Smaldone

The impact of firearms on the history of Africa has increasingly engaged the attention of historians during the last decade. Oliver and Fage signalized this interest in the effects of European military technology on African societies by labeling the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries in African history as "The Era of Firearms and the Slave Trade."¹ Other historians have dealt with a number of case studies in greater detail: Yves Saint-Martin has studied the use of artillery in the Tukolor state,² Martin Legassick has examined the impact of firearms on Samori's military organization,³ Richard Pankhurst has dealt with the history of firearms in Ethiopian history,⁴ and S. Tenkorang has drawn attention to the importance of firearms in the rivalry between Ashanti and the coastal states in the eighteenth century.⁵

Despite this growing interest in the use of firearms in African history, very little attention has been given to the subject of the trade in firearms: to my knowledge the only published work is R. W. Beachey's study, "The Arms Trade in East Africa in the Late Nineteenth Century."⁶ Yet it seems crucial that before one can undertake an investigation of the effects of firearms on the military organization of African societies he must first examine the question of the firearms trade; otherwise he will be tempted to make statements regarding the traditional forms of African military organization and the use or non-use of firearms. In this paper we will be concerned with the nature and volume of the firearms trade in the Central Sudan

1. R. Oliver and J. D. Fage, A Short History of Africa (Baltimore, 1962), chs. 10 and 11.
2. "L'Artillerie d'el Hadj Omar et d'Ahmadou," Bulletin de l'Institut Française de l'Afrique Noire, Série B, XXVII, 3-4 (1965), 506-572.
3. "Firearms, Horses and Samorian Army Organization 1870-1898," Journal of African History, VII, 1 (1966), 95-115.
4. "Fire-Arms in Ethiopian History (1800-1935)," Ethiopian Observer, VI, 2 (1962), 135-180; "The History of Fire-Arms in Ethiopia prior to the Nineteenth Century," Ethiopian Observer, XI, 3 (1968), 202-225; An Inquiry into the Penetration of Fire-Arms into Southern Ethiopia in the 19th Century prior to the Reign of Menilek," Ethiopian Observer, XII, 2 (1969), 128-136.
5. "The Importance of Firearms in the Struggle between Ashanti and the Coastal States, 1708-1807," Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, IX (1968), 1-16.
6. Journal of African History, III, 3 (1962), 451-467.

in the nineteenth century.⁷ The conclusions reached herein will correct some of the erroneous assertions that have been made about the nature of army organization in the Central Sudan and the use of firearms.

The use of firearms had been known in Hausaland and Bornu long before the nineteenth century, but there is no evidence to suggest that guns were present in large numbers or that their use had noticeable effects on military organization or the conduct of war.⁸ Even in the nineteenth century, when the impact of firearms in other areas of Africa was dramatic, the states of the Central Sudan remained relatively unaffected by this new military technology. The persistence of traditional patterns of Central Sudanese military organization, based on the extensive use of light horse cavalry, has led some scholars to conclude that this mode of army organization was unsuitable for the adoption of firearms. It has been suggested for instance that the Muslim emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate did not employ many guns simply because the nature of cavalry warfare had "little place for firearms."⁹ Another theory to account for the relative scarcity of firearms in Sokoto contends that the ascendancy of the Fulani ruling class, which rested in part on its control of cavalry as an instrument of physical force, would have been endangered if firearms had been introduced in large numbers.¹⁰ These explanations cannot be supported by direct evidence; in fact the evidence points unquestionably to the contrary. As we shall see, the only reason why firearms were not used extensively in the Central Sudan in the nineteenth century is that trading conditions did not permit the states of this area to obtain access to a source of guns. Furthermore, when the arms

7. This paper is based upon research done at Northwestern University in preparation for the writer's doctoral thesis, "Historical and Sociological Aspects of Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate" (1970). In this paper the Central Sudan will be taken to include the Sokoto Caliphate, Bornu, and Wadai.
8. The earliest reference to firearms in the Central Sudan occurs in "The Kano Chronicle," in H. R. Palmer, trans., Sudanese Memoirs (3 vols.; Lagos, 1928), III, 109, which mentions guns being brought to Kano by a Bornu prince during the reign of Dauda Bakon Damisa (?1421-1438). This dating is so early that it must be viewed with suspicion. By the end of the sixteenth century, however, it is certain that Mai Idris Alooma of Bornu acquired musketeers from Turkey and organized slave detachments to handle these guns. Ahmed ibn Fartua, History of the First Twelve Years of the Reign of Mai Idris Alooma of Bornu (1571-1583), H. R. Palmer, trans. (Lagos, 1926), 11-12. "The Kano Chronicle" records that in Mohammed Kumbari's reign (?1731-1743) guns were brought to Kano from Nupe (p. 124), and that Babba Zaki (?1768-1776) was the first ruler of Kano to organize a bodyguard of musketeers (p. 126). Although Palmer's datings are suspect, these two references fit well with the other data that suggest the spread of trade inland from the Guinea coast in the eighteenth century.
9. J. O. Hunwick, "The Nineteenth Century Jihads," in J. F. Ade Ajayi and I. Espie, eds., A Thousand Years of West African History (Ibadan, 1965), 277, n. 10.
10. R. A. Kea, "Fortifications and Siegecraft in the Fulani Empire" (unpublished seminar paper, Institute of African Studies, Legon, Ghana, April 1966), 32-33.

trade did increase substantially in the last decades of the century, these states quickly adapted themselves to the use of firearms.

* * * * *

There were two sources from which the states of the Central Sudan could have imported firearms during the nineteenth century. The first was from the Muslim states of North Africa via the trans-Saharan caravan routes, and the second was from the European merchants trading on the Guinea coast to the south. There were, however, important reasons why both these sources were not exploited during the greater part of the century, and why it was only in the last decades that significant numbers of firearms began to be imported. We will now examine these two sources to determine how and when the supply of firearms became available.

The Northern Routes

The rulers of the Central Sudanese states were well aware of the value of firearms and most anxious to acquire them from both sources. Sokoto recognized very early the value of the trans-Saharan contacts with the Muslim states to the north: in 1808 a treaty was concluded with Sarkin Air Muhammad Kamna to keep open the trade routes between Agades and the new capital of the Caliphate.¹¹ The Caliph Muhammad Bello (1817-1837) also was in correspondence with the Karamanli dynasty in Tripoli, endeavoring to maintain good relations during their mutual hostility toward Bornu in the 1820's.¹²

The evidence is also clear that one of the main concerns of these Sudanese states was to establish firm relations with Britain in the hope of receiving firearms, artillery, and munitions. The Denham-Clapperton-Oudney expedition of the early 1820's, the first European mission to the Sudan, distributed munitions of various kinds at the courts of Bornu and Sokoto, arousing keen interest in these marvelous weapons and whetting the desire of their rulers to obtain more. Rockets created a particular sensation in Bornu, and when Clapperton reached Katagum, in the Sokoto Caliphate, the Emir had heard reports of these fabulous weapons and requested his European guest to supply him with similar war materials.¹³ The Caliph Bello also persistently entreated Clapperton for muskets, powder, ammunition, and rockets,¹⁴ and later addressed a personal letter to King George IV requesting two

11. Muhammad Bello, Infāq al-maisūr, E. J. Arnett, trans., in The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani (Kano, 1922), 120-121.
12. See A.D.H. Bivar, "Arabic Documents of Northern Nigeria," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, XXII, 2 (1959), 344-348.
13. D. Denham, H. Clapperton, and W. Oudney, Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in 1822, 1823, and 1824 (4 vols.; London, 1831), I, 258, 272-273; II, 132, 140; III, 54, 253.
14. Ibid., IV, 107, 111-112, 132.

cannon, powder and shot.¹⁵ Indeed, one of the most revealing aspects of this European exploratory mission was the "great demand in the interior for arms of all kinds. . ."¹⁶

The importance attached to the acquisition of firearms by the Sudanese states also impressed later European visitors. In 1851 Emir Muhammad Bello (1844-1869) of Katsina asked Barth to give him two things: "a medicine to increase his conjugal vigor" and some rockets as "a medicine of war" to frighten his enemies.¹⁷ The Vizier of Bornu told Barth, perhaps facetiously, that Shaikh Umar would abolish slavery if H. M. Government would supply him with 1000 muskets and four cannon.¹⁸ And in 1889 the Emir of Nassarawa begged H. M. Commissioner Major Claude MacDonald to intercede for him and induce the British Royal Niger Company traders to sell him modern rifles and ammunition to enable him to raid the pagan tribes on the southern bank of the Benue river.¹⁹ These instances support beyond reasonable doubt the argument that the Sudanese rulers, far from demonstrating a fear of military innovations, showed themselves anxious to seize every opportunity to obtain new and advanced weapons.

Despite this obvious interest of the Central Sudanese states in importing firearms, the northern route did not become an important source of guns until the last decade of the nineteenth century, and even then only for Wadai. As we shall see, the factors that affected the flow of arms to the Sudan were beyond the control of the states of that region.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Saharan entrepôts of Fezzan and Ghat were involved in the transshipment, from the Mediterranean ports into the desert, of guns, gun barrels, gun and pistol locks, small shot, powder, and flints.²⁰ It is clear, however, that these munitions were not among the major commodities in the trans-Saharan trade, and that most of the guns and ammunition were purchased by the Arab and Tuareg merchants who controlled the trade as well as the desert trade routes. This restriction of a trade that was in itself small meant that very little if

15. H. Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa (London, 1829), xii-xiii; the letter is translated in E. W. Bovill, ed., Missions to the Niger (London, 1966), IV, 725.
16. A. Adu Boahen, Britain, the Sahara, and the Western Sudan, 1788-1861 (Oxford, 1964), 67.
17. H. Barth, Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa . . . 1849-1855 (3 vols.; New York, 1857), I, 468.
18. Ibid., II, 327.
19. A. F. Mockler-Ferryman, Up the Niger (London, 1892), 72-73; C. MacDonald, "Exploration of the Benue and Its Northern Tributary the Kebbi," Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, XIII, 8 (1891), 456.
20. Proceedings of the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa (2 vols.; London, 1810), I, 188, and II, 136; G. F. Lyon, A Narrative of Travels in Northern Africa in the Years 1818, 19, and 20 (London, 1821), 114, 153-154, 159; F. Hornemann, The Journal of Frederick Hornemann's Travels, from Cairo to Mourzouk . . . in the Years 1797-8, in Bovill, Missions, I, 100.

any war material reached Hausaland or Bornu.²¹ During the jihad of Shaikh Uthman dan Fodio in northwestern Hausaland in the first decade of the century there appears to have been only a handful of guns.²² In the 1820's Al-Kanemi's arsenal at Kuka contained only about 200 muskets and pistols,²³ and in 1826 Clapperton counted only 42 muskets among some 50,000 of Bello's troops besieging the Gobirawa at Konya, while the latter had but a single gun.²⁴

In the 1830's political changes in North Africa rendered it even more difficult for the Central Sudanese states to obtain firearms from this source. In 1830 a French expeditionary force occupied the Ottoman province of Algiers, and five years later the Ottoman Turks, in an effort to reassert their power in North Africa, reoccupied Tripoli.²⁵ Both the French and Ottoman authorities proceeded to extend their control over the desert hinterland in the next decades and to regulate the arms trade. In many of the towns and oases of the Algerian desert there existed domestic industries for the manufacture of gunpowder with local materials and imported ingredients like sulfur and saltpeter, and the repair of firearm mechanisms.²⁶ There was also a regular but not large trade in firearms and related munitions in the desert hinterland of Algiers; this commerce was, as in the Tripolitan interior, carried by Tuareg merchants.²⁷ But as the French progressively extended their control over these areas, they proscribed the trade in firearms and registered those guns that were possessed by the native population.²⁸ Most of the traffic in firearms was thereby regulated, except for a small trade in munitions that emanated from Tunis and Morocco, over which the French had no control.²⁹

A similar set of circumstances prevailed in Tripoli and its hinterland after 1835, when an Ottoman force reoccupied Tripoli, abolished the Karamanli dynasty, and incorporated Tripoli as a province (vilayet) of the Ottoman Empire. This reassertion of Ottoman

21. Proc. of the Assoc., I, 154, 180-181 and II, 194; Lyon, Narrative, 110-111; Hornemann, Journal, 114-115.
22. See the context in which guns are mentioned in Bello, Infāq al-maisūr, 59; Abdullah ibn Muhammad, Tazyīn al-waraqāt, M. Hiskett, ed. and trans. (Ibadan, 1963), 108, 112; and Diwā' al-sultān, M.D.W. Jeffreys, trans., African Studies, IX, 2 (1950), 80.
23. Denham, Clapperton, and Oudney, Travels, II, 218, 233.
24. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 185 ff.; forty-one of these guns were used by the Kano contingent, and the other was a French fusil possessed by the Zaria detachment.
25. In 1714 Tripoli achieved the status of a nominal dependent upon Constantinople as a result of a successful coup by Ahmed I against Turkish authority. The new ruling dynasty, the Karamanlis, ruled Tripoli until the Sultan's troops reoccupied the province in 1835.
26. M.J.E. Daumas, Le Sahara Algérien (Paris, 1845), 61, 94, 148-149, 150-153, 221.
27. Ibid., 68, 85-86, 96, 108, 136, 148-149, 200, 231, 266-268.
28. V. Largeau, Le Pays de Rirha, Ouargla, Voyage à Rhadames (Paris, 1879), 105, 110-112; E. C. Cat, A Travers le Désert (Paris, 1892), 93.
29. Daumas, Le Sahara Algérien, 85-86, 108, 137, 148-149, 200, 266-268, 296; H. Duveyrier, Sahara Algérien et Tunisien, C. Maunoir H. Schirmer, eds. (Paris, 1905), 140.

power in North Africa was an attempt to compensate for the loss of Algiers to France, to forestall any further annexations of Ottoman territory by European powers, and to serve as an object lesson to refractory dependents like the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali. Like the French in Algiers, the Ottoman overlords sought to extend their dominion over the lands in the interior. In 1841 the desert entrepot of Fezzan was conquered and annexed to Tripoli; Ghadames and Ghat followed in the next few years.³⁰ The Turks also imposed an embargo upon the export of firearms outside the vilayet,³¹ thus preventing the savanna states of the Central Sudan from acquiring these weapons from Tripoli.

The effectiveness of this prohibition against the trade in firearms from the Tripolitan province may be demonstrated by comparing the trade of Tripoli and the nature of Arab and Tuareg armaments in the periods before and after the Ottoman occupation. We noted above that during the half century before the Ottoman intervention there was a small but regular trade in guns and ammunition to the south. But after 1835 accounts of the trans-Saharan trade from Tripoli are conspicuously lacking in any reference to munitions,³² except for a small contraband trade in gunpowder.³³ As we might expect, the Arab and Tuareg merchants and desert tribes reflect this change in the nature of their weapons. In 1818-1820 Captain G. F. Lyon described the Tuaregs as "sure marksmen" with the long-guns they generally carried,³⁴ and the large Arab escort that accompanied the Denham-Clapperton-Oudney mission to Bornu a few years later was armed with muskets.³⁵ But by mid-century the embargo had serious effects among the desert peoples. In 1850 Richardson reported that the local population south of Tripoli had been disarmed by the Turks, that munitions were contraband items,³⁶ and that consequently the arms traffic to the Sudan was negligible.³⁷ Whereas Lyon had observed that the long-gun was a common weapon among Tuareg tribesmen before the embargo, Barth found that only a few Tuareg possessed muskets in 1850;³⁸ even the forty armed Kel Owi who escorted Barth and Richardson across the desert were forced to rely on their European clients for powder and shot to defend the party against marauding Hoggar Tuaregs.³⁹

30. E. Rouard de Card, La France et la Turquie dans le Sahara Oriental (Paris, 1910), 11-12, 14-18.

31. C. W. Newbury, "North African and Western Sudan Trade in the Nineteenth Century: A Re-Evaluation," Journal of African History, VII, 2 (1966), 237.

32. See C. H. Dickson, "Account of Ghadamis," Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, XXX (1860), 255-260; and "Extract from Vice-Consul C. H. Dickson's Report of His Journey from Tripoli to Ghadames," Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, XXII (1852), 131-136; Daumas, Le Sahara Algérien, 168, 172.

33. Daumas, Le Sahara Algérien, 200.

34. Lyon, Narrative, 111.

35. Denham, Clapperton, and Oudney, Travels, I, 38.

36. J. Richardson, Narrative of a Mission to Central Africa, Bayle St. John, ed. (2 vols.; London, 1853), I, 19.

37. F.O. 881/59, p. 24.

38. Barth, Travels, I, 289-290, 337-338.

39. Richardson, Narrative, I, 212, 226-227.

Thus the French annexation of Algiers and the Ottoman reoccupation of Tripoli closed the northern source of firearms to the states of the Central Sudan. Throughout North Africa in fact the pattern was the same: the Mediterranean powers, Muslim and European alike, regarded the interior of Africa as a slave reservoir and an area for potential conquest, and not wanting to increase its capacity for military resistance, restricted the trade in munitions to the Sudan.⁴⁰

Local geopolitical conditions also affected the ability of each of the Sudanese states to obtain firearms. The Sokoto Caliphate for instance was surrounded by hostile states along its northern and eastern frontiers, the most important of which were Zinder, Maradi, Gobir, and Bornu. These states took advantage of their strategic location with respect to the North African trade routes to control the supply of munitions and prevent the shipment of war materials to Sokoto.

During most of the nineteenth century Zinder was tributary to Bornu and pursued a policy of intermittent hostility toward the Fulani emirates to the south. Emir Tanimu of Zinder (1841-1843; 1851-1884) is reported to have built up a large army equipped with 6000 muskets and forty muzzle-loading cannon. The firearms were purchased from Tripoli, as was sulfur for powder and some of the brass for the cannon. Saltpeter and carbon were obtained locally, and gunpowder, muskets, cannon mounted on carriages, and projectiles were manufactured at Zinder.⁴¹

40. S. Comte d'Escayrac de Lauture, Le Desert et le Soudan (Paris, 1853), 434, 551. France, now in possession of Algiers, used this base in North Africa to advance southward into the Sudan. In 1820, even before the Turkish intervention, the Pasha of Tripoli had expressed his desire to conquer Bornu and the Sudan. F.O. 76/14, Warrington to Bathurst, 7 August 1820, cited by Kola Folan, "Some Economic Aspects of the History of Tripoli in the Reign of Yusuf Pasha Karamanli, 1795-1832" (unpublished seminar paper, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Feb. 1969). We have already observed that the Ottomans pursued an imperial policy with regard to the Saharan oases and commercial centers. The Egyptian Khedives also monopolized the trade in firearms as a means of controlling the slave trade in the southern Sudan, and of preventing states such as Darfur from obtaining weapons with which to resist an Egyptian expedition. See H. J. Fisher and V. Rowland, "Guns and Gunpowder in the Central Sudan" (unpublished paper, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Feb. 1969), 6. I am grateful to Mr. Fisher and Miss Rowland for permission to cite this paper.
41. Documents Scientifiques de la Mission Tilho (1906-1909) (3 vols.; Paris, 1910-1914), II, 444-445; M. Abadie, La Colonie du Niger (Paris, 1927), 125-126. I am unable to explain satisfactorily how Tanimu was able to acquire these firearms. The guns must have been obtained during the later years of his second reign, because although Richardson heard reports of cannon at Zinder (Narrative, II, 258), he observed that the army was equipped with swords, spears, and bows (p. 194) and that none of the Emir's troops had guns (p. 239). It is significant that Tanimu did not get his firearms from the regular caravan trade; he purchased about 1000 camels from Tuareg herders and organized his own caravans for Tripoli and Egypt (Mission Tilho, II, 446). It is also probable that Tanimu encouraged Arab and Tuareg merchants to

The independent Hausa state of Maradi was established after the ruling dynasty of Katsina fled northward after being ousted by the Fulani during the jihad. In the reign of Dan Baskore (1854-1875),⁴² which coincided with that of Tanimu at Zinder, Maradi purchased flintlocks and ammunition from Zinder.⁴³ Gobir, another independent Hausa state that successfully resisted the jihad and subsequent efforts by Sokoto to eliminate it, remained throughout the nineteenth century a close ally of Maradi, and they frequently joined forces in military campaigns against the emirates of Sokoto. The situation of Zinder, Maradi and Gobir astride the main caravan routes from the north enabled them to monopolize the trade in firearms.

To the east of the Sokoto Caliphate was the state of Bornu, which was the southern terminus of the principal caravan route from Tripoli, and where the court strictly controlled the firearms supply.⁴⁴ Bornu received several hundred guns from its client-state Zinder, and two cannon to serve as models for Bornu blacksmiths to copy.⁴⁵ But Bornu's supply of firearms was also restricted by the unwillingness of the Turkish authorities in Tripoli to sell guns to the Sudanese states,⁴⁶ and by the general commercial depression that beset the trans-Saharan trade in the 1850's.⁴⁷ By the 1870's Shaikh Umar's army

smuggle guns from the north (I am indebted to R. Ann Dunbar for her comments and suggestions regarding Tanimu's supply of muskets. Miss Dunbar is currently writing her Ph.D. thesis on Zinder in the nineteenth century). Tanimu's successors were unable to maintain the trade relations necessary for a continuous supply of guns. When the French occupied Zinder in 1899 Emir Ahmadu's force included only 800 gunmen: see J. Joalland, Le Drame de Dankori (Paris, 1930), 107; and Cmdt. Chailley, "La Mission du Haut-Soudan et le drame de Zinder," Bulletin de l'Institut Française de l'Afrique Noire, XVII, 1-2 (1955), 37.

42. These dates are given by M. G. Smith, "A Hausa Kingdom: Maradi under Dan Baskore, 1854-75," in D. Forde and P. M. Kaberry, eds., West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1967), 93-122; no indication is given of how they were determined. Mission Tilho, II, 463, gives 1858-1879.
43. Smith, "Maradi," 114.
44. See Denham, Clapperton, and Oudney, Travels, IV, 111-112. Louis Brenner of Boston University, whose recently completed thesis on Bornu in the nineteenth century is to be published by Clarendon Press, has confirmed this point in a personal communication, 12 February 1968.
45. Mission Tilho, II, 445, 447.
46. See B. G. Martin, "Five Letters from the Tripoli Archives," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, II, 3 (1962), 354-359. One of these letters from the Pasha of Tripoli to his son, the Governor of Fezzan, refers to a Bornu request for firearms that could not be honored without referring the matter to the Porte in Constantinople.
47. In 1869 Nachtigal reported that "the direct trade between Bornu and the coast of the Mediterranean had for many years been greatly reduced." "Journey to Lake Chad and Neighbouring Regions," Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, XLVI (1876), 398. See also Boahen, Britain, 107-108, and A. Adu Boahen, "The Caravan Trade in the Nineteenth Century," Journal of African History, III, 2 (1962), 351-352.

included about one or two thousand gunmen, but it appears that a large portion of these muskets were obtained from Zinder and the production of the local blacksmith industry.⁴⁸

In the state of Wadai the situation at this time with respect to commerce and firearms was similar. Unlike the states of Hausaland and Bornu, whose trans-Saharan commercial contacts were of great antiquity, Wadai seems to have opened regular trade with North Africa in the early nineteenth century.⁴⁹ Yet even in the 1850's trade between Benghazi and Wadai was insignificant,⁵⁰ and the arsenal of the Sultan was estimated by Barth to contain only about 300 guns.⁵¹

Thus at mid-century trading conditions in the Central Sudan were not conducive to the importation of firearms. The North African states had rather effectively enforced a prohibition against the sale of munitions to the south, and the trans-Saharan trade had fallen off considerably. The states of Zinder, Maradi, Gobir, Bornu, and Wadai were able to obtain small quantities of firearms from private traders or contraband shipments, but the Sokoto Caliphate was isolated by these hostile states and barred from access to the already restricted firearms supply from the north.

But at the same time changes were occurring which would drastically alter these conditions. The introduction of the Muslim Sanusi Order in Cyrenaica in 1843 and its subsequent spread throughout the Libyan desert and hinterland had important consequences for the commercial and political situation of the eastern Central Sudan. Members of the Order engaged in trade and transport, and intensive missionary efforts were extended into Fezzan, Tibesti, Borku, Ennedi, Baghirmi, Wadai, Darfur, and among the desert Tuareg. The Sanusi lodges (zawiyas) formed a network of commercial posts, and Kufra, the "Capital" of

48. In 1866 G. Rohlfs estimated that Shaikh Umar had 1000 infantry and 1000 cavalry armed with flintlocks, and twenty cannon, some of which were cast in Bornu. R. E. Ellison, "Three Forgotten Explorers of the Latter Half of the 19th Century with Special Reference to Their Journeys to Bornu," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, I, 4 (1959), 323. Several years later Nachtigal, who visited Umar's arsenal, estimated that it contained about 1000 guns of all kinds. Sahara et Soudan, J. Gourdault, trans. (Paris, 1881), 351. O. Temple claims that there were sixteen units of gunmen in the Bornu army. C. L. Temple, ed., Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria (Lagos, 1922), 437. Bornu seems not to have been able to increase its supply of firearms after this time; at the end of the century the army was still reported to have about 1500-2000 guns of all kinds. See C.O. 879/58/580, encl. 1 in No. 44, Wallace to Chamberlain, 5 March 1901, p. 104; C.O. 879/72/684, No. 22, Lugard to Chamberlain, 17 May 1902, p. 55. We noted above in note 45 that Zinder supplied Bornu with several hundred muskets. It also seems that local blacksmiths were able to fabricate firearms; an eyewitness reported that when Rabeh entered Kuka he found very few European guns, but 1100 native guns. F.O. 101/86, encl. to Africa No. 2, Jago to Salisbury, 10 April 1896.

49. See Barth, Travels, II, 645.

50. J. Hamilton, Wanderings in North Africa (London, 1856), 176-177, 197.

51. Barth, Travels, II, 658.

the Order, became a great desert emporium for monitoring trade throughout the eastern Central Sudan.⁵² In Wadai the Sultan acknowledged the spiritual authority of the Grand Sanusi and instituted a regular direct caravan traffic between Wadai and Cyrenaica, in which the ivory and slaves of the Sudan were exchanged for arms and ammunition from the north.⁵³

Thus one of the results of these changes was that by the 1890's munitions became for the first time important items in the trans-Saharan trade. Most of this arms trade was contraband and confined to the Cyrenaica-Wadai route. Some of this contraband trade originated at Alexandria and certain towns in the Egyptian interior, but most of the munitions were carried from Greece and the Mediterranean islands of Malta, Crete, and Cyprus. The trans-Mediterranean trade was carried mostly by Greek sponge fishers who took advantage of the lack of coastal surveillance to disembark their stores of smuggled munitions at various points on the long coastline: Benghazi and Tobruq were the most important ports for the arms trade, but Misurata, Derna, Tokra, and Tripoli itself also served as points of entry. Ottoman barques and steamers were involved also in this illicit trade: the smuggled munitions were transshipped at sea onto smaller vessels which then put in along the unprotected coast. The Turkish police and customs agents were notoriously inefficient and corrupt, and overlooked the arms shipments that came through regular import channels. Even the Turkish soldiers who were supposed to enforce the prohibition against the trade in munitions participated in the arms smuggling. It was therefore relatively easy for well known professional smugglers to conduct the contraband trade with impunity by means of bribes.⁵⁴

Once the smuggled munitions arrived on the Tripolitan coast, they were transported to the hinterland and sold. It seems that Sanusi adherents dominated this trade; the guns were stored in their

52. For more detailed treatments of the Sanusiyya and the Cyrenaica-Wadai trade route, see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, The Sanusi of Cyrenaica (London, 1949), 21-22; Boahen, Britain, 110-111; Boahen, "Caravan Trade," 352-354; E. A. Tarverdova, "Role of Sanusites in Monitoring Caravan Trade of People of Chad Basin with the Countries of North Africa in the Second Half of Nineteenth Century" (paper presented at the Second International Congress of Africanists, Dakar, 1967).
53. Hamilton, Wanderings, 197; A. S. White, From Sphinx to Oracle (London, 1899), 119-121; H. M  hier de Mathuisieulx, A Travers la Tripolitaine (Paris, 1903), 188; R. Forbes, The Secret of the Sahara: Kufara (London, 1921), 14-15, 63, 228, 324-327.
54. Some of the information in this paragraph on the contraband arms traffic is derived from the detailed reports contained in the F.O. 101 Tripoli files for the 1890's, and it would be tedious to document them individually. These Tripoli files, especially those of the 1890's, contain a wealth of information on the Central Sudan, most of it coming by way of the caravan traders who had recently been to Kano, Kuka, Dikwa, or Wadai. Some of the more accessible data on the arms trade can be found in White, Sphinx, 123-124; M  hier de Mathuisieulx, Tripolitaine, 6, 13-14, 89; Forbes, Sahara, 327; H.K.W. Kumm, From Hausaland to Egypt (London, 1910), 112-115; H. Vischer, Across the Sahara from Tripoli to Bornu (London, 1910), 168, 187.

zawiyas and carried to the interior by Sanusi caravans. These were weapons of every conceivable make and description: old flintlock muskets, double-barrelled fowling pieces, assorted handguns and pistols, as well as modern precision rifles of various kinds -- Remingtons, Winchesters, Martini-Henries, Lebel's, Mausers, Gras, Sniders -- and other varieties of carbine and repeating weapons. Most of the firearms trade was directed toward Wadai, where the Sultan's arsenal increased rapidly from about 4000 flintlocks in the 1870's to 10,000 guns thirty years later, one-quarter of which were modern repeaters.⁵⁵

Some of the munitions carried in this trade inevitably were sent farther afield. The desert Tuaregs were able to arm themselves with precision weapons in some quantity. At Murzuk in 1906 Vischer noted the large traffic in firearms with the coast and observed that the Azgar Tuaregs were armed with modern repeating weapons.⁵⁶ In the late 1890's the Hoggar Tuareg, armed with newly acquired rifles, launched many successful raids against the Ulemiden and Azaouac, and extended their domain as far south as Adar.⁵⁷ In the Algerian hinterland also the Tuareg groups equipped themselves for the first time with modern rifles.⁵⁸ Guns and ammunition found their way even as far as the Niger bend and Tuat in the western Sahara.⁵⁹

Although there was a general expansion of the arms trade in the Central Sudan in the 1890's, the Sanusites and Wadai controlled most of this traffic to the disadvantage of Bornu and the Sokoto Caliphate. We noted above that by the 1870's Shaikh Umar of Bornu had increased his arsenal to more than a thousand muskets. After the conquest of Bornu in 1893 by Rabeh the latter continued the policy of the Shaikhs by controlling the flow of firearms into Bornu and preventing munitions from being exported outside his domain. Nevertheless, Rabeh had difficulty in obtaining firearms and ammunition. His ravages in the region of Bornu shut down the Tripoli trade for several years,⁶⁰ and

55. Nachtigal, Sahara und Sudan (3 vols.; Berlin, 1879-1881), III, 240; H. Carbou, La Region du Tchad et du Ouadai (Paris, 1912), 263. Both of these sources are cited by Fisher and Rowland, "Guns and Gunpowder," 7, n. 1.
56. Vischer, Across the Sahara, 168, 187.
57. Capt. Fonferrier, "Etudes historiques sur le mouvement caravanier dans le Cercle d'Agadez," Bulletin du Comité d'Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, VI, 2 (1923), 307; Y. Urvoy, "Histoire des Oulliminden de l'est," Bulletin du Comité d'Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, XVI, 1 (1933), 81; Y. Urvoy, Histoire des Populations du Soudan Central (Colonie du Niger) (Paris, 1936), 210.
58. Cat, A Travers le Desert, 231.
59. L. Binger, "Les Routes commerciales du Soudan Occidentale," La Gazette Géographique, XXI, Part 1, 11 (1886), 204; C. Sabatier, Touat, Sahara et Soudan (Paris, 1891), 191.
60. After 1885 the Tripoli-Bornu caravan traffic suffered a severe depression, probably as a result of the siphoning off of much of the trade to the Cyrenaica-Wadai route to the east. The destruction of Bornu by Rabeh in 1893 dealt the death blow to this historic caravan traffic. Trade remained completely paralyzed until 1896-1897, when the first caravans since the fall of Bornu were reported to be on the move; but this commerce was never revived. The documentation of the trading conditions on the Bornu-Tripoli

despite Rabeh's early collaboration with the Sanusi, both the latter and Wadai severed his contacts with Benghazi by refusing to trade with him.⁶¹ There is no evidence that Rabeh's supply of guns increased measurably after his conquest of Bornu, and of the two or three thousand firearms possessed by his army only a few hundred were modern repeaters.⁶² The scarcity of firearms in Bornu is also suggested by the prices current at his capital of Dikwa in 1895: Martini-Henry rifles were selling for 100 Maria Theresa dollars, and double-barreled fowlers for fifty dollars, while slaves cost only three to seven dollars.⁶³

In the emirates of Sokoto the situation with respect to the northern trade routes was even more unfavorable. Kano, which enjoyed the most direct and substantial commercial contact with Tripoli, was unable to import large numbers of firearms due to the control of the arms trade by its northern hostile neighbors, especially Zinder, and to Rabeh's similar policy in Bornu.⁶⁴ Moreover, in the late 1890's the caravan trade with Tripoli was seriously disturbed by desert marauders.⁶⁵ In 1897 it was estimated that only about eight to fifteen Winchesters reached Kano from the north.⁶⁶ At about the same time in Zaria there was a great demand for modern rifles and ammunition, but almost none could be found.⁶⁷

In summary, the firearms trade from the north during the nineteenth century was not very important for the Central Sudan. In the first quarter of the century the trade was small, and monopolized by

route is plentiful, and cannot be indicated here in detail. Abundant information can be found in the F.O. 101 files after 1885, and in the commercial reports of the British consuls at Tripoli and Benghazi which were published annually in the Parliamentary Papers.

61. F.O. 101/88, Africa No. 4, Alvarez to Salisbury, 12 July 1898; C.O. 446/2, Northern Nigeria No. 12314, encl. to letter of 1 June 1898, Alvarez to Salisbury, 12 April 1898.
62. F.O. 101/86, encl. to Africa No. 2, Jago to Salisbury, 10 April 1896; and encl. to Africa No. 4, Jago to Salisbury, 2 May 1896. After the death of Rabeh in 1900, his army was depleted by desertions, but his son and successor, Faderalla, continued to command about 2000 gunmen (C.O. 879/58/580, No. 44, Wallace to Chamberlain, 12 April 1901, and encl. 1 in same, 5 March 1901; encl. 1 in No. 82, Wallace to Chamberlain, 28 July 1901). Some estimates of Rabeh's force of gunmen, such as that by Sir Alan Burns which puts the number at 5000, must be regarded as exaggerations. History of Nigeria, 6th ed. (London, 1963), 57.
63. F.O. 101/86, Commercial No. 6, Alvarez to Salisbury, 19 Sept. 1896.
64. C. H. Robinson, "News from Kano," Niger and Yoruba Notes, II, 14 (1895), 15.
65. F.O. 101/88, Africa No. 2, Jago to Salisbury, 1 Dec. 1898; Africa No. 3, Jago to Salisbury, 16 Dec. 1898; F.O. 101/91, Africa No. 1, Jago to Lansdowne, 20 April 1901; F.O. 101/92, Africa No. 5, Jago to Lansdowne, 6 Oct. 1902; C.O. 446/5, encl. in Northern Nigeria No. 481, 4 Jan. 1899.
66. F.O. 101/88, Consul-General Jago's Supplementary Report for the Year 1897 on the Vilayet of Tripoli, Confidential, printed for use of the Foreign Office, June 1898, p. 20.
67. C. H. Robinson, Hausaland (London, 1896), 87.

Arab and Tuareg merchants. After the third decade of the century Algiers and Tripoli ceased to export munitions, except for a very small contraband trade. Furthermore, the general unwillingness of the North African powers to supply their southern neighbors with military stores ensured that the flow of munitions to the Central Sudan was minimal. In the last decade of the century there was a remarkable expansion of trade between Cyrenaica and Wadai, but neither Rabeh in Bornu nor Sokoto were able to tap this Sanusi-controlled commerce. As we will see in the next section, Rabeh and the Sokoto Caliphate depended on the southern source for munitions.

The Southern Routes

In the preceding section it was shown that the states of the Central Sudan, especially the Sokoto Caliphate, were isolated from the supply of firearms from the north during most of the nineteenth century. The situation along the southern frontiers of the savanna zone was similar, that is, the Sudanese states were denied direct access to the European arms trade on the Guinea coast by the presence of the forest kingdoms which controlled seaborne commerce. As we shall see, however, the Sokoto Caliphate did eventually gain access to this southern source of guns, but it was due more to European enterprise which broke the coastal monopoly than to the willingness of the forest states to trade with the states to the north.

From the region of the Gold Coast to the Cameroons the coastal kingdoms of West Africa controlled the valuable trade in European firearms, to the access to which many of them owed their ascendancy. The effectiveness of the restriction by the coastal states of the exportation of firearms to the northern hinterland was noted by Europeans before the nineteenth century. Simon Lucas, on the basis of testimony from North African traders, reported that:

Fire arms are unknown to such of the nations on the Niger as the Shereef has visited; and the reason which he assigns for it is, that the Kings in the neighbourhood of the coast, persuaded that if these powerful instruments of war should reach the possession of the populous inland states, their own independence would be lost, have strictly prohibited, and by the wisdom of their measures have effectively prevented this dangerous merchandize from passing beyond the limit of their dominions.⁶⁸

In the powerful state of Ashanti the monarch monopolized the firearms trade, and forbade the exportation of munitions to the north.⁶⁹ Likewise in the kingdom of Dahomey the firearms trade was controlled by a royal monopoly.⁷⁰ Farther to the east the states of

68. Proc. of the Association, I, 179; also quoted in R. Hallett, ed., Records of the African Association 1788-1831 (Edinburgh, 1964), 99.

69. S. Tenkorang, "The Importance of Firearms"; J. Dupuis, Journal of a Residence in Ashantee (London, 1824), pp. L, LI, cxxxii; T. E. Bowdich, Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee (London, 1819), 335; I. Wilks, "Ashanti Government," in Forde and Kaberry, eds., West African Kingdoms, 218.

70. Dupuis, Journal, p. LI; J. Lombard, "The Kingdom of Dahomey," in Forde and Kaberry, West African Kingdoms, 89-90.

Niger delta and Oil Rivers monopolized the supply of firearms from European traders.⁷¹ And in the southern Cameroon grasslands also local kings and chiefs controlled the trade and distribution of firearms purchased from European merchants on the Cross and Nun rivers.⁷² Under these conditions, in which the traffic in firearms along the Guinea coast was strictly regulated by the coastal kingdoms, it was virtually impossible for the states to the north to obtain a direct access to the southern supply of munitions.

By the 1820's, however, the Yoruba states began to acquire firearms, the Ijebu coastal Yoruba who traded with Europeans being the first to so arm themselves.⁷³ Richard Lander observed at this time that "quantities of muskets are procured from the coast, but they are of comparatively little use to the [Yoruba] people, who know not how to handle them with effect."⁷⁴ Thus during the third decade of the nineteenth century the "gun-frontier" began to move inland from the coast. As Lander's remarks indicate, the number of firearms in the immediate interior increased but did not as yet affect materially the character of warfare. Guns were still scarce in the northern emirates,⁷⁵ and virtually nonexistent in Nupe following the intervention of the Fulani, whose troops were armed only with spears, swords, and bows and arrows.⁷⁶

But by the middle of the century most of Yorubaland had been brought within the gun-frontier and muskets were the standard weapons of Yoruba warriors.⁷⁷ In the early 1850's it was reported that "most of the [Yoruba] people have inferior smooth-bored guns, which are sold to the Guinea negroes by European traders, and sent off to be sold again in the interior,"⁷⁸ yet even by the end of the decade the use of guns had not become general north of Abeokuta.⁷⁹ The firearms trade in the Yoruba states was an overland commerce, originating on the coast and being carried largely by traders of Lagos and Ijebu, and after the Ijebu monopoly was broken by the Egba, through Abeokuta.⁸⁰ But with the Yoruba states engaged in intensive trade competition and internecine warfare after the breakup of the Oyo empire, it was impossible for the Muslim emirates to the north to acquire munitions via this overland route.

71. K. O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885 (London, 1956), 107; G. I. Jones, The Trading States of the Oil Rivers (London, 1963), 72, 88.
72. E. M. Chilver, "Nineteenth Century Trade in the Bamenda Grassfields, Southern Cameroons," Afrika und Übersee, XVI, 41 (1962), 242-243.
73. S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas (London, 1921), 208; J.F.A. Ajayi and R. Smith, Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1964), 17.
74. R. Lander, Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa (2 vols.; London, 1830), II, 222.
75. See above, n. 24.
76. M. Laird and R.A.K. Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa (2 vols.; London, 1837), II, 86-87.
77. Ajayi and Smith, Yoruba Warfare, 18.
78. T. J. Bowen, Adventures and Missionary Labours in Several Countries in the Interior of Africa from 1849 to 1856 (Charleston, S.C., 1857), 319.
79. R. Campbell, A Pilgrimage to my Motherland (New York, 1861), 66; see Ajayi and Smith, Yoruba Warfare, 20.
80. Ajayi and Smith, Yoruba Warfare, 20.

After 1830, however, when the Lander brothers opened the Niger river to European trade, it was possible for European merchants to bypass the coastal states' commercial monopoly and sell directly on the inland markets. These radically new trading conditions enabled Nupe to emerge after the 1840's as the principal source of munitions for the emirates farther to the north. The Niger mission of 1841 found that gunpowder was being sold in the main Nupe market at Egga,⁸¹ and so great was the local pagans' fear of the Nupe army that they told the European visitors that "every Fulatah is armed with a gun."⁸² Ten years later Richardson, while in Zinder, was told of South American traders who were exchanging powder and shot for slaves in Nupe.⁸³ At about this time Nupe began to export muskets and powder to the north: guns and powder were shipped to Kano,⁸⁴ and English and American gunpowder to Bornu.⁸⁵ Guns from the coast were reported to be reaching Air in the Sahara.⁸⁶ In the 1850's and 1860's muskets costing 10-16 s. in England were selling in Nupe at 10-12 thousand cowries, or about one-sixth the price of slaves.⁸⁷

Although the quantity of munitions reaching the emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate was still small, it is evident that a regular trade was developing. By the 1850's the gun-frontier had almost absorbed the Yoruba states and had begun to advance through Nupe. The importance of Nupe is that it was the first emirate to fall within this widening zone of gun-warfare. As such it became the main port through which munitions were exported to the northern emirates. During the next decades Nupe itself fell within the gun-frontier and the other emirates began to be engulfed by the steadily northward-moving gun-belt.

81. W. Allen and T.R.H. Thomson, A Narrative of the Expedition . . . (2 vols.; London, 1848), II, 99; Parliamentary Papers, XLVIII (1843), 127.
82. J. F. Schon and S. A. Crowther, Journals . . . of the Expedition up the Niger in 1841 (London, 1842), 207; the Nupe army was also reported "having a great number of horses, guns, cutlasses, bows, and arrows" (pp. 138-139). Allen and Thomson, Narrative, II, 116, record the same story of Nupe firearms: "Fire-arms are used by the Filatahs: each has his musket." These are certainly exaggerated reports, but the point is clear that the possession of guns was giving Nupe a decided advantage over its enemies.
83. Richardson, Narrative, II, 278, 349. Richardson also noted that many slaves from Zinder were sent to Kano (p. 274) or to Nupe (pp. 203, 228-229), whence American merchandise was beginning to drive out the goods of the north. Barth also complained that South American goods were flooding the Sudan. Travels, I, 516-517.
84. Richardson, Narrative, II, 260. Barth, Travels, I, 520, observed that a few firearms were being imported to Kano from Nupe and that pistols and blunderbusses were sold only privately to wealthy men.
85. Richardson, Narrative, II, 264.
86. Ibid., I, 316.
87. F.O. 97/334, Baikie to Russell, No. 4 of 1862, 13 Feb. 1862; Dike, Trade and Politics, Tables A and B, 105, 106; S. A. Crowther and J. C. Taylor, The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger (London, 1859), 393; W. B. Baikie, Narrative of an Exploring Voyage (London, 1856), 294, 317.

W. B. Baikie's establishment of Lokoja in Nupe territory in 1859 further enhanced the position of Nupe as middleman in the arms trade. Emir Masaba (1841-1850; 1859-1873) welcomed the British connection and the advantages to be derived from the permanent European trading post in his territory. As one British trader reported of Masaba:

His great virtue was his attachment to white traders. He gave them every accommodation, encouragement, and protection, to facilitate the establishment of trading factories on his part of the "Kwara" -- the native name here for the Niger.⁸⁸

In 1870 Masaba signed a decree officially encouraging the settlement of Lokoja, hoping it would become the most most prosperous market confluence of the Niger and Benue.⁸⁹ By the late 1870's there were four British commercial firms trading regularly up the Niger, and eight or ten steamers did business at Nupe every year.⁹⁰ Masaba also sold slaves down the Niger at Idda in exchange for gunpowder, at the rate of one good male slave for a small keg.⁹¹

The British post at Lokoja also served as a diplomatic channel for the Emirs of Sokoto to establish contact with Britain in the hope of obtaining firearms. Masaba wrote many letters to the British consuls at Lokoja and Lagos and to Queen Victoria, asking repeatedly for muskets, rifles, powder, and ammunition.⁹² Ilorin also opened direct contact with Britain through the consular authorities at Lagos.⁹³ Emir Abdullah (1855-1882) of Kano wrote to the English Queen through Baikie, requesting a skilled technician to manufacture firearms and ammunition for his army, and offering to pay the expenses of his transportation.⁹⁴ Baikie communicated with Gwandu and the Caliph at Sokoto, expressing his desire to open extensive commercial contacts and to sell guns and powder.⁹⁵ Baikie also opened Abuja and Zaria to British trade.⁹⁶

88. J. Whitford, Trading Life in Western and Central Africa (Liverpool, 1877), 218.
89. F.O. Confidential No. 1871, pp. 15-16. For the history of Lokoja, see H. J. Pedraza, Borrioboola-Gha (London, 1960).
90. A. Burdo, The Niger and the Benueh, G. Sturge, trans. (London, 1880), 244-245; Pedraza, Borrioboola-Gha, 72.
91. Whitford, Trading Life, 218-219.
92. See for instance F.O. 97/435, Masaba's letter to Victoria, 20 April 1865, and Victoria's letter to Masaba, 20 July 1865; F.O. 97/436, enclosures 3, 4, 5 in Glover to Clarendon, 19 April 1866.
93. See F.O. 97/436, enclosures 1 and 2 in Glover to Clarendon, 19 April 1866.
94. F.O. 97/334, encl. to No. 26 of 1862, Baikie to Russell, 25 July 1862.
95. F.O. 2/32, encl. 2 to No. 55 of 1859, Baikie to Malmesbury, 6 August 1859.
96. Mallam Hassan and Mallam Shuaibu, A Chronicle of Abuja, F. Heath, trans. (Ibadan, 1952), 28. Baikie's own account of his mission was published as "Notes of a Journey from Bida in Nupe, to Kano in Hausa, performed in 1862," Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, XXXVII (1867), 92-108.

The military power of Nupe was expanded considerably under the direction of Masaba. Munitions constituted a large portion of imports and by 1871 the army of Nupe was reported to have rockets, 2000 firearms, and eight cannon, two of them six-pounders. The cannon were mounted and Masaba's gunmen had been trained to fire them by members of the Niger mission.⁹⁷ Masaba and his successors enforced a strict monopoly of the arms trade and forbade the reexport of munitions. Masaba, recorded John Whitford, "forbids his subjects, on pain of death, to purchase powder or guns, keeping deadly weapons and war material only for his regular army at Bida [sic]."⁹⁸ Nupe supplied its allies with munitions to subdue mutual enemies. In 1878 the traveler Burdo observed canoes "full of arms and ammunition" being sent by Nupe to aid its pagan tributary ally Imaha in an offensive against the pagan village of Amara.⁹⁹ Nupe also provided Sokoto,¹⁰⁰ Gwandu,¹⁰¹ Missau,¹⁰² and Abuja¹⁰³ with muskets.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century further changes in the commercial situation on the Niger brought concomitant changes in the nature of the trade in war materials. French commercial competition with Britain on the Niger and Benue became acute after 1880, and by 1884 the *Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (CFAE) seriously challenged the British trading position. This commercial rivalry was finally resolved at the Berlin West African Conference of 1884-1885, at which Britain was awarded the exclusive right to administer the provisions of the Conference on the lower Niger. In 1886, Sir George Goldie, who bought out the French interests on the eve of the Conference and thereby engineered the British coup, succeeded in obtaining a royal charter for his Royal Niger Company and with it a de facto monopoly of European commerce on the Niger and

97. F.O. Confidential No. 1871, p. 8; F.O. Confidential No. 2023, W. H. Simpson's Report of the Niger Expedition, 1871, pp. 17, 19 (also quoted in T. Hodgkin, Nigerian Perspectives [London, 1960], 294-295, and cited by J. E. Flint, Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria [London, 1960], 25); S. A. Crowther, Report of the Overland Journey from Lokoja to Bida, on the River Niger, and thence to Lagos, on the Sea Coast, from Nov. 10th, 1871, to Feb. 8th, 1872 (London, 1872), 13.
98. Whitford, Trading Life, 250; see also F.O. Confidential No. 2023, p. 7; Flint, Goldie, 25; J. E. Flint, "The Chequered History of Nupe," West African Review, XXX, 382 (1959), 588; A. Mattei, Bas-Niger, Bénoué et Dahomey (Grenoble, 1890), 141; J. Thomson, "Niger and Central Sudan Sketches," Scottish Geographical Magazine, II, 10 (1886), 586; J. Milum, "Notes of a Journey from Lagos up the River Niger to Bida . . .," Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, III, 1 (1881), 31.
99. Burdo, Niger, 222 ff.
100. F.O. Confidential No. 2023, p. 17.
101. E. J. Arnett, Gazetteer of Sokoto Province (London, 1920), 41; E. J. Arnett, "History of Sokoto," in Sokoto Fulani, 41; M. Last, The Sokoto Caliphate (London, 1967), 73.
102. J. M. Fremantle, "A History of the Region Comprising the Katagum Division of Kano Province," Part IV, Journal of the African Society, XI, 42 (1912), 188.
103. Hassan and Shuaibu, Abuja, 15-16. A regular trade soon developed between Abuja and Nupe and Ilorin, Abuja selling slaves and purchasing muskets and powder (p. 79). E. Viard also reported that Nupe traders were the intermediaries in the arms trade from Europe to the northern interior. Au Bas-Niger, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1886), 89, 92.

Benue.¹⁰⁴ Trading stations now extended from the Niger delta to the upper reaches of the Benue, thus providing such emirates as Nassarawa, Zaria, Bauchi, Muri, and Adamawa with direct access to the arms trade.

Nupe took full advantage of the European competition in the early 1880's to exact concessions from the rival parties. Emir Umar (1873-1882)¹⁰⁵ continued the policy of military expansion inaugurated by his predecessor Masaba.¹⁰⁶ In 1882, with the assistance of British and French steamers, he crushed the Kyedye revolt with an army that numbered in its ranks at least 550 gunmen.¹⁰⁷ Umar also employed rockets and an unknown European military adviser in an attack on Ig-birra country.¹⁰⁸ Emir Maliki (1882-1895) was equally concerned with military affairs. In 1882 he demanded and received 200 barrels of powder and 200 guns from Commandant Antoine Mattei as the price of a trading concession for the CFAE,¹⁰⁹ and in 1886 alone he received at least 400 guns and 400 barrels of powder as trade goods.¹¹⁰

The arms trade on the Benue, hitherto of little importance, reached considerable proportions after the 1880's. From the Royal Niger Company trading stations on the river the Emirs of the eastern Caliphate purchased muskets and powder. A regular caravan traffic developed from the Benue river posts, through Bauchi and Missau, to Rabeh's capital at Dikwa, and from this source Rabeh obtained guns and powder.¹¹¹ Tibati and Banyo, both vassals of Adamawa, at this time entered direct trade relations with Europeans and began to import

104. On the Niger Company and French competition see Flint, Goldie; C. W. Newbury, "The Development of French Policy on the Lower and Upper Niger, 1880-98," Journal of Modern History, XXXI, 1 (1959), 16-26; A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, "Expansion on the Benue 1830-1900," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, I, 3 (1958), 215-237.
105. The standard work on Nupe, S. F. Nadel's A Black Byzantium (London, 1942), gives the dates of Umar's reign as 1873-1884, and that of his successor Maliki as 1884-1895. Yet it is clear from contemporary sources that Umar died in 1882. Mattie, agent-general of the CFAE, was told in the autumn of 1882 of the death of Umar and the accession of Maliki. Bas-Niger, 55.
106. Nadel, Black Byzantium, 86. Nadel claims that Umar's flintlocks were imported from the north (pp. 82, 86). This is incorrect. As we have seen, Nupe imported its weapons from the south.
107. Ibid., 110. See Flint, Goldie, 38-39, for the background and details of this rebellion. For a study of the Kyedye see Nadel, "The Kede: A Riverain State in Northern Nigeria," in M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, eds., African Political Systems (London, 1940), 164-195.
108. C. R. Niven, "The Kabba Province of the Northern Provinces, Nigeria," Geographical Journal, LXVIII, 4 (1926), 300.
109. Mattei, Bas-Niger, 55.
110. D.J.M. Muffett, "Sokoto: Fulani-Hausa Resistance to British Occupation," in M. Crowder, ed., West African Resistance: The Military Response to Colonial Occupation (New York, 1971). I am indebted to Professor Muffett for allowing me to see a typescript of this paper.
111. F.O. 101/86, encl. in Africa No. 2, Jago to Salisbury, 10 April 1896; and Africa No. 4, Jago to Salisbury, 2 May 1896.

larger quantities of guns;¹¹² Rabeh also sought to trade with Yola to purchase more munitions from the Niger Company post there.¹¹³ Emir Haji (1868-1896) of Katagum, defying the instructions of Caliph Abd al-Rahman (1891-1902) to deny Rabeh access to trade, moved his main market to Gamawa on the Bornu-Kano road, and opened an extensive trade with Dikwa. Gamawa specialized in trade with the conqueror of Bornu, and under the stimulus of the new commercial prosperity doubled in size; gunpowder was among the most important items exchanged for horses, slaves, and weapons from Bornu.¹¹⁴

After about 1880 also the political situation in Yorubaland provided the occasion for Ilorin to acquire firearms from several new sources. Ilorin had joined the Ekiti Confederation against Ibadan about 1880, and by exchanging troops with its Yoruba allies had gained a temporary access to the musket supply from Benin.¹¹⁵ After 1888, however, Ilorin opened direct trade with Abeokuta and the coast, and began to import American-made Snider breechloading rifles and to use them against the Ibadans.¹¹⁶ In 1889 the Ilorin army of 2000 troops besieging the Ibadans at Ofa had many muskets but only twenty-eight Sniders without ammunition. The besieged Ibadans, on the other hand, were believed to have 300 Sniders with ammunition, but were untrained in their use.¹¹⁷ By the early 1890's weekly caravans were moving between Ilorin, through Abeokuta, to the coast;¹¹⁸ and the British Colonial Office authorities in Lagos, hostile to the Royal Niger Company, turned a blind eye to the arms trade with Ilorin.¹¹⁹ Nupe also entered this contraband trade in rifles, and supplied Ilorin with guns from its own stockpile.¹²⁰ The Alafin of Oyo, fearing the power of Ibadan's general Ajayi and therefore anxious to keep the Ibadan army

112. Chilver, "Nineteenth Century Trade," 233-234, 238, 242-243; see C. Maistre, A Travers l'Afrique Centrale du Congo au Niger, 1892-1893 (Paris, 1895), 231; M.D.W. Jeffreys, "Some Historical Notes on the Ntem," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, II, 1 (1961), 275-276.
113. F.O. 101/86, encl. in Africa No. 2, Jago to Salisbury, 10 April 1896; P. L. Monteil, De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Lac Tchad (Paris, 1895), 346; see also L. Mizon, "Les Royaumes Foulbé du Soudan Central," Annales de Géographie, IV (Oct. 1894-July 1895), 358-360; and P. F. Lacroix, "Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire des Peuls de l'Adamawa," Etudes Camrounaïses, V, 37-38 (1952), 36.
114. Fremantle, "A History," Part III, Journal of the African Society, XI, 41 (1911), 64-65; V. N. Low, "The Border States: A Political History of Three Northeast Nigerian Emirates, ca. 1800-1902" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1967), 286-289.
115. Johnson, Yorubas, 448; C.O. 879/33/399, p. 101.
116. C.O. 879/33/399, p. 40; Johnson, Yorubas, 577; H. B. Hermon-Hodge, Gazetteer of Ilorin Province (London, 1929), 72; S. J. Hogben and A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, The Emirates of Northern Nigeria (London, 1966), 297; Flint, "History of Nupe," 589.
117. C.O. 879/33/399, pp. 12, 20, 21; Mockler-Ferryman, Up the Niger, 204, n.2; see Johnson, Yorubas, 505.
118. C.O. 879/33/399, p. 6; Johnson, Yorubas, 649. In 1894 Lugard also noted this arms trade with Lagos. See M. Perham and M. Bull, eds., The Diaries of Lord Lugard (4 vols.; London, 1963), IV, 142, 149, 189, 196.
119. Flint, "History of Nupe," 589.
120. Ibid.

occupied in the field, was reported to be secretly providing arms to both Ibadan and Ilorin to prolong the wars.¹²¹

In this section we have been concerned mainly with the introduction and spread from the south of flintlock muskets, that is, smooth-bored, single-shot, muzzle-loading, iron-barrelled, ball-shooting weapons. This sort of gun, the standard firearm in Europe from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, was superseded by various forms of more advanced weapons by mid-century, and large quantities were "dumped" on the African market. It was this type of obsolete weapon that pushed the gun-frontier through Yorubaland and the emirates to the north. By about 1880 breechloading repeating rifles with rifled steel barrels that fired metallic cartridges were appearing on African markets, and a second wave of military technology -- the "rifle-frontier" -- began to sweep over the same territory traversed by the gun-frontier only half a century earlier. Modern rifles of the Snider type first became important in Yorubaland during the Ekiti wars (1878), reaching Ibadan in 1881, but costing £10-£15 each.¹²² As we have seen, this new rifle-frontier reached Ilorin by the late 1880's. But here the rifle-frontier stopped.

In 1890 at the Brussels Conference a decision was taken by the participating European powers to regulate the arms trade to Africa. The fifteen signatories of the Brussels Act, in an effort to eliminate the remnants of the slave trade, pledged to forbid the sale of modern precision rifles in tropical Africa; flintlocks, unrifled guns, and common gunpowder were exempted from this restriction. In the territories of the Niger Goldie's Company rigidly enforced these provisions. So stringently were these rules applied that C. H. Robinson, after his excursion through Hausaland in 1894-1895, was able to boast that "in the course of a journey of over a thousand miles through the Hausa States, I do not remember seeing . . . more than half-a-dozen rifles."¹²³ A small number of muskets and common gunpowder continued to be exported to the northern emirates until the beginning of the twentieth century,¹²⁴ but the trade in modern firearms from the south had ceased.

The containment of the rifle-frontier before it reached most of the Sudanese states meant that a thorough revolution in military techniques and organization was stillborn. The armies of these states could acquire only limited numbers of outmoded muskets, which were, in the words of F. D. Lugard, "the very worst and most rotten class of flint locks, more dangerous to the owner than to the enemy, and less dangerous than bows and poisoned arrows."¹²⁵ R. W. Beachey, in his study of the arms trade in East Africa, has also pointed out that so "perilous were they to the user that a plausible defence of gun-

121. C.O. 879/33/399, pp. 1-2; there is a general discussion of the arms trade in the Lagos hinterland in P. F. Teba, "Britain's Role in Regulating the Arms Traffic in West Africa, 1873-1919" (unpublished M. Litt. thesis, Cambridge University, May 1967), ch. III.

122. Johnson, Yorubas, 492; Ajayi and Smith, Yoruba Warfare, 18, 21.

123. Robinson, Hausaland, 11.

124. C.O. 465/2 (1901); C.O. 465/3 (1902); Annual Reports, Northern Nigeria: No. 377 (1901), pp. 52, 54; No. 409 (1902), p. 166.

125. Perham and Bull, Diaries, IV, 109.

running was that the natives were being led to exchange their effective spears and assegais for a decidedly less dangerous if more noisy weapon."¹²⁶ It was the scarcity and poor quality of muskets, and the restriction of the trade in modern firearms that prevented the states of the Central Sudan from adopting the technology of gun-warfare. The gun-frontier, advancing from the south, did not begin to spread across large areas of the Sokoto Caliphate until the 1870's, and the rifle-frontier was delimited before it reached the regions of the western Central Sudan. This withholding of modern rifles from Africa contributed to the preservation of traditional forms of military organization in the Central Sudan and facilitated the conquest of the area by British and French armies equipped with repeating rifles, artillery, and machine guns.

Summary and Conclusion

External conditions determined the sources, nature, and volume of the firearms trade to the Central Sudan throughout the nineteenth century. The states of the Central Sudan were unable to import large quantities of firearms until the last decades of the century. The munitions trade from North Africa -- a contraband trade -- became important only after about 1890, was controlled by the Sanusi, and flowed mainly between the Sanusi centers in Cyrenaica and Wadai. The firearms traffic from the Guinea coast began to penetrate the Sokoto Caliphate after about 1870, with Nupe acting as the principal port of entry and distribution. In the 1880's the Benue regions gained direct access to the gun trade as a result of Anglo-French commercial rivalry; Nupe and Ilorin also benefited during the last two decades of the century from the new overland route opened to the coast.

Whereas the northern trade in firearms after 1890 consisted largely of modern precision weapons, the southern source yielded only muskets, the trade in repeating rifles having been stopped after the Brussels Conference. The Sokoto Caliphate depended almost entirely on firearms imported through Nupe. Wadai obtained most of its firearms from Cyrenaica, and Bornu its guns from Tripoli, Zinder, and local manufacture. Rabeh seems to have acquired the bulk of his firearms before conquering Bornu; afterward, although he was able to import some munitions from the Niger Company posts on the Benue, the northern source of firearms in Cyrenaica was cut off by the refusal of Wadai and the Sanusites to trade with him.

126. Beachey, "The Arms Trade," 451.

CHAPTER 9

SLAVERY IN THE HAUSA-FULANI EMIRATES¹

Allan Meyers

Introduction

This essay contributes substantively and methodologically to the solution of an ethnological and historical problem -- the comparative study of slavery -- by discussing the slave system of a group of nineteenth-century West African kingdoms² and by evaluating the types of sources used in this reconstruction. The goal of ethnologists and many historians is comparative: an analysis of human behavior without reference to any one cultural or temporal context. To this end, it is necessary to establish analytical categories which apply universally. Too often the constraints of culture-specific thought categories have prevented a complete understanding of behavior in other historical or geographical settings. A case in point is the study of slavery: frequently, historians' notions of slavery have been shaped by the experience of Western Europeans as slave-keepers in the New World.

Comparative studies have shown the inadequacy of this model for the analysis of slavery in different historical and ethnographic settings.³ This conclusion pertains equally to Africa, where even the earliest European observers recognized the differences between African systems of slavery and the plantation slavery of the Americas. Contemporary Africanists have re-emphasized these differences,⁴ and have also indicated the differences between different slave systems in Africa.⁵ Generalizations, then, to all cultural practices described

1. Early forms of this paper were presented to the Cornell University Seminar on Ethnohistory, May 1969, and the annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory, September 1969. Many thanks are due the participants in the Cornell Seminar, and especially its instructor, John Murra, who carefully read and criticized earlier drafts. Daniel McCall made helpful comments and suggestions. The author alone bears responsibility for all shortcomings.
2. For historical and ethnographic summaries of the Fulani jihads and the Hausa-Fulani emirates, see S. Hogben and A. Kirk-Greene, The Emirates of Northern Nigeria (London, 1966), and H. Johnston, The Fulani Empire of Sokoto (Oxford, 1967).
3. For example, M. Finley, "Between Slavery and Freedom," Comparative Studies in Society and History, VI (1964); H. Nieboer, Slavery as an Industrial System (Gravenhage, 1910).
4. B. Davidson, Black Mother (London, 1961); M. G. Smith, "Slavery and Emancipation in Two Societies," Social and Economic Studies, III (1954), 239.
5. R. Cohen et al., "Slavery in Africa," Trans-Action, IV (1967), 44.

as slavery are premature. They must await the study of practices described as slavery in a variety of contexts and the distillation from these studies of more or less universal criteria.

Such comparative studies depend equally upon the contributions of history and descriptive ethnography. For non-literate peoples, however, who lack extensive written records, historical reconstructions present special methodological problems, which are best approached by a strategy characterized as "ethnohistory."⁶ The present analysis seeks not so much to compare Hausa-Fulani slavery with other forms, as to illustrate the feasibility of historical reconstructions of poorly documented cultures and to describe one variety of slavery. To these ends ethnographic research, oral histories, and personal accounts are valuable data. Like all sources, they are subject to various biases; but when combined with written sources, they solve important problems.

Sources

Since this study involved no original fieldwork, the primary sources are written accounts by nineteenth-century Europeans. These are supplemented by translations of local (i.e., African) documents, post-conquest ethnographies, and biographical testimonies. To establish the respective merits and shortcomings of these different types of sources, I shall briefly evaluate each and shall then show how their combination elucidated the most important aspects of Hausa-Fulani slavery: the extent of slavery, the recruitment and disposition of slave personnel, and the sanctions enforcing the slave system.

The analysis relies most heavily upon the accounts of nineteenth-century Europeans who, for a variety of reasons, visited the regions controlled by Fulani emirs. For purposes of this study, their principal biases are of two types: (1) a failure to separate facts from their own opinions; and (2) a tendency to make facile assumptions about Hausa-Fulani social structure. In the first case nineteenth-century explorers generally tended to philosophize as well as record facts: that is, they tried to use their data to illustrate some particular pedagogical or moralistic theory. They did not, in so doing, always distinguish objective observations from their own opinions. Without knowing the biases of individual authors, it is difficult to determine the extent of such factors as selective reporting and outright distortions. All, however, had certain preconceived notions which, no doubt, affected the accuracy of their reportage. It must also be remembered that European racial and cultural biases would be especially strong in discussions of Africa and Africans.⁷

6. J. Vansina, Oral Tradition (Chicago, 1965).

7. To illustrate the importance of this bias, I cite the following apology from the introduction to a posthumous publication of the journals of H. Clapperton: "Clapperton was evidently a man of no education; he nowhere disturbs the progress of a day's narrative by any reflexions of his own, but contents himself with noticing objects as they appear before him, and conversations as they were held." H. Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa . . . (reprint of 1829 ed.: London, 1966), xviii. Although this makes Clapperton an ideal historical source,

Distortions are especially likely in considerations of slavery; for European travelers seem to have shared in the abolitionist spirit of their respective times. Perhaps in regard of this spirit, many included among the stated aims of their travels the suppression of the slave trade and of African slavery. Their published accounts contain lengthy discussions of the slave trade (which all held as most odious) and various schemes for its abolition. Heinrich Barth, a nineteenth-century explorer, even records a conversation with the vizier of the emirate of Bornu about the feasibility of abolishing slavery in that region.⁸ With this predisposition, the lengthy treatments of the more gruesome aspects of the slave trade seem hardly objective. Even so careful an observer as Barth frequently reports the havoc wrought by African slave raiders but rarely gives even the barest details. This is not to suggest that Europeans never witnessed atrocities associated with slave raiding but only that they shared a strong abolitionist bias which probably affected the accuracy of their reports about slavery. It is thus significant to note their generally favorable opinion of the conditions of African domestic slavery.⁹

My final criticism of these accounts concerns their ethnographic sensitivity: how did these Europeans know who was a slave or what constituted slavery? Though slaves are reported in a variety of contexts, there are remarkably few descriptions of what slavery entailed and how one distinguished slaves from free men. Though Barth, for example, distinguished between the slaves and the free servants of a minor official,¹⁰ he never stated the visible indicators of slave status. Except for those instances when social status was unmistakable (e.g., residence in a slave village), it is never clear whether the reports reflect social reality or the writer's impression. On the basis of more recent fieldwork,¹¹ such criteria of slave status clearly exist and existed in the past: for example, special terms of reference, facial scarification, and occupation. That the historical data do not mention them raises this methodological problem.

The second, and much less extensive form of documentation comes from those native documents (written originally in Hausa, Fulani, or Arabic) which have been translated. With these a major problem is their authenticity. Although certain literary canons exist,¹² the possibility of forgeries is very clear. Even when they appear authentic, these documents are more often records of royal succession and conquest or religious polemic than they are social histories. Nonetheless, they provide such important evidence as the existence of large

it causes one to question the objectivity of other, and presumably more erudite, travelers. Consider, for example, the discussion of Dr. Robinson (traveling some sixty-five years after Clapperton) of the failure of self-government in Liberia. C. Robinson, Hausaland (London, 1896).

8. H. Barth, Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa, III (London, 1857), 132 ff.

9. For example, A. Burns, History of Nigeria (London, 1963), 203.

10. Barth, Travels, II, 363.

11. For example, M. G. Smith, Government in Zazzau (London, 1964); M. F. Smith, Baba of Karo (London, 1954).

12. A. Bivar, "A Manifesto of the Fulani Jihad," Journal of African History, II (1961), 235; M. Hiskett, "Kittab al-Farq: A Work . . . Attributed to 'Uthman dan Fodio," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, XXIII (1960), 559.

slave raids, the regions victimized by raiders, and the disposition of slaves in the community. The Chronicle of Abuja, for example, describes in detail the use of slaves as household servants, farm workers, chiefs, and royal title-holders.¹³ As more of these documents are located and translated, particularly those from smaller towns and villages, they may reflect more the way of life at the local level, perhaps in relation to the slavery system.

As might be expected, then, the more conventional documentary evidence for the history of the Hausa-Fulani emirates is, at best, scanty. Fortunately, these are supplemented by some biographical material, published oral accounts, and post-conquest ethnography. The former two sources depend largely upon the work of the missionary-linguist S. Koelle, who interviewed freed slaves in Sierra Leone, while the latter results from efforts begun at the turn of the century which continue until today.

Much has been written of the merits and disadvantages of these non-conventional historical sources, and since the problem has been thoroughly reviewed elsewhere,¹⁴ I shall criticize them only briefly. To be of value, these data must be collected and analyzed with great care and with careful attention to any biases of the ethnographer or informant. The possible sources of these biases will vary considerably, depending upon such factors as the informant himself, his social status, and the relationship of the local group to the tribal or national government. Thus, for example, older people may have poorer memories than young ones or contemporary politics may affect the recollection of past events, particularly in regard to such sensitive topics as slavery. Despite these many possible biases, oral accounts and ethnographic reports are especially valuable for the reconstruction of social history and have amplified areas which written accounts treat ambiguously or not at all. Rather than evaluate the sources used in the present study at this point, I shall criticize each individually, as it applies to the development of the discussion of Hausa-Fulani slavery.

Magnitude of Slavery

About the actual magnitude of slavery, European travelers told very little. Judging from all accounts, slavery was certainly extensive -- estimates of the size of the slave population range from at least fifty percent of the population of Kano emirate¹⁵ to greater than ninety-five percent of its capital city.¹⁶ Except for extraordinarily large slaveholders, however, these sources rarely make reference to individual cases.

Michael and Mary Smith, on the other hand, are able to make far more accurate estimates for the southern part of the emirate of

13. A. Hassan and S. Na'Ibi, A Chronicle of Abuja, F. Heath, trans. (Lagos, 1962).
14. D. McCall, Africa in Time Perspective (Boston, 1964); Vansina, Oral Tradition.
15. Barth, Travels, II, 144.
16. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 171.

Zazzau. On the basis of their fieldwork they could, for example, distinguish the descendants of slaves and free men¹⁷ and thus construct rough retrospective censuses. Mary Smith found that her informant could give the composition -- in terms of slaves and free people -- of both her father's and grandfather's households.¹⁸ From this fieldwork they determined not only upper limits for individual slaveholders¹⁹ but also the approximate ratio of slaves to free men in nineteenth-century Zazzau (about 1:1).²⁰ Potentially, this type of fieldwork may also resolve such difficult problems as changes in local slave systems over time and the pervasiveness of slave keeping. Though the use of any historical records to determine numbers is necessarily imprecise,²¹ the Smiths' intensive fieldwork gives a much more satisfying reconstruction than the written documents.

Whatever the exact number, the apparent magnitude of slavery raises a number of problems having to do with the recruitment and disposition of slave personnel and the sanctions which both maintained the slaves' discipline and protected their masters. A combination of the two types of data permits a partial solution to these problems, a solution which either, alone, does not provide.

Recruitment

An important consideration in such a large system is the sources of slaves. Of the several sources apparently tapped, slave-raiding seems to have been the most important. All European visitors remarked upon the devastating effects of such raids, which they occasionally witnessed,²² and local documents also describe them.²³ On the basis of this evidence it is possible to distinguish three types of slave raids.

The nineteenth century was a time of great political and social instability with almost constant warfare in the Hausa-Fulani territories,²⁴ and in these wars slaves were often the booty. Europeans

17. M. G. Smith, The Economy of Hausa Communities of Zaria, Colonial Research Studies 16 (London, 1955), 3.

18. Smith, Baba of Karo.

19. Smith, Zazzau, 157 ff.

20. Smith, "Slavery," 240.

21. This imprecision is most pronounced in the treatment of extraordinary behavior. M. G. Smith, Zazzau, 157, for example, reports a slave village reputed to have a population of perhaps 3000. This seems unreasonably high, especially since there is no indication that it comes from any source other than the informant's head. Though it is certainly possible that there was such a village, an estimate like this should not be accepted uncritically unless one has some idea how it was made. This is not a specific criticism of Smith's work or of oral sources, but a general comment about population estimates. Though I doubt such a large population, even as an upper limit, it does not affect the description of slavery in general. In such cases, archaeological investigation would prove valuable, since a village of this size would probably leave noticeable remains.

22. For example, Barth, Travels, III, 194 ff.

23. M. Hiskett, ed., Taziyin al-Waraqat . . . (Ibadan, 1963), 125.

24. See Hogben and Kirk-Greene, Emirates; Johnston, Sokoto.

claimed that the desire for slaves motivated these wars -- including holy wars²⁵ -- even between previously friendly neighbors.²⁶

Two considerations, however, would seem to limit the frequency of wartime slave raids. The first is a religiously motivated reluctance to enslave free people, or at least free Muslims. Of those available to us, many documents of the Fulani jiḥād express mild opposition to the enslavement of free people -- a thing distinct from hereditary slavery.²⁷ One interpretation of the origins of the jiḥād suggests that the Fulani reacted to the excesses of the Hausa kings, among which was the enslavement of free Muslims.²⁸ Thus, religious considerations may have curtailed the slave-taking of at least the more zealous soldiers.

In addition, strategic considerations almost certainly limited the number of wartime slave captures. The armies needed great mobility, and the presence of many captives -- including able-bodied men -- would have presented logistical and security problems. Consequently, captured populations or at least their adult males were often killed rather than enslaved. Both African²⁹ and European sources³⁰ describe this practice.

Raids organized with the express object of slave capture³¹ seem much more likely sources of large numbers of slaves. All documents indicate that these raids were widespread, both geographically and temporally -- slave raids are reported in Adamawa emirate as late as the 1920's.³² Such raids often involved the coordinated efforts of several political units; one source, for example, speaks of "polyglot raiding confederacies."³³ Organized raids took place both periodically -- to satisfy domestic needs or to pay tribute -- and sporadically, as when an outstanding debt required prompt settlement.³⁴

Not all slave raiding was so coordinated. Often individuals or small bands kidnapped travelers or war refugees, later selling their victims as slaves.³⁵ No doubt the social disruption attendant upon the almost constant warfare of the nineteenth century as well as the ready market for slaves encouraged this practice.

The seizure of slaves was, however, beyond the capacity of many villages. Either their own military weakness or the absence of a target population doubtless prevented many from slave raiding. Since

25. A. Kirk-Greene, Adamawa Past and Present (London, 1958), 130.

26. A. Mockler-Ferryman, British Nigeria (London, 1902), 240.

27. Hiskett, "Kittab al-Farq," 577; Bivar, "Manifesto."

28. P. Morton-Williams, "Fulani Penetrations into Nupe and Yoruba," in I. M. Lewis, ed., History and Social Anthropology, A.S.A. Monograph no. 7 (London, 1968), 8.

29. Hiskett, Tazyin al-Waraqat, 126.

30. Barth, Travels, III, 203.

31. It is not clear to me whether these occurred more often in time of war or peace. If they were wartime raids, however, the raiding parties were most likely very specific in their purpose.

32. Kirk-Greene, Adamawa, 84.

33. E. Chilver and P. Kaberry, "Sources of the Nineteenth-Century Slave Trade: Two Comments," Journal of African History, VI (1965), 119.

34. Barth, Travels, IV, 56.

35. For example, Mockler-Ferryman, Nigeria, 242.

local villages often had to contribute slaves to a regional tribute, they nonetheless required a reliable source of slaves.

The custom of judicial or statutory enslavement provided one such source. This refers to the custom of punishing criminals or social deviants and sometimes members of their families by enslaving them. Clapperton, for example, reported that the residents of one village enslaved violators of post-partum sex restrictions.³⁶ Ethnographic data confirm the frequency of this type of punishment for a variety of infractions.³⁷ Some of these statutory slaves were, of course, retained by their villages for local use. Many, however, became part of the regional or international trade in slaves.

This particular problem of "sentencing" people to slavery seems especially susceptible to fieldwork solution. Apart from informants' testimonies, this practice may be diagnosed by characteristic social behavior. In one instance a person's mother's brother -- and only his mother's brother -- could sell him out of the community for "crime or reckless living."³⁸ This custom would probably be reflected in marked deference to one's mother's brother, a deference which might persist even after the abolition of the slave trade. This does not suggest that extreme deference to mother's brother (or anyone else) necessarily implies the right of enslavement but only that such a form of social control in regions characterized by participation in the slave trade offers a possible source of slave personnel.

In conclusion then, the slaves of the Hausa-Fulani emirates came from a number of sources as evidenced by documentary and ethnographic material. Of the sources described, organized slave raids seem to have contributed the greatest number of slaves, followed by war captures, smaller raids, and punitive enslavement.

A unique collection of oral accounts gives some confirmation to this conclusion. As mentioned above, S. Koelle, a missionary and linguist, recorded over 200 short biographies of African slaves who had been liberated by the British and brought to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in the mid-nineteenth century.³⁹ In addition he trained certain slaves who later recounted their own stories. Among these latter was one Ali Eisami, a native of Bornu who had been enslaved by Fulani raiders during the holy war in this kingdom. His life story includes a description of how he became a slave, his disposition by his various masters, and the direction of the movement of slaves from Bornu to the coast.⁴⁰ As more of these life histories are published, they will provide increasingly valuable data.

For the present study an analysis of the mode of enslavement of Koelle's informants indicates that about one-third each had been kidnapped or taken as war captives, with smaller proportions having been

36. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 95.

37. For example, C. Meek, Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria (New York, 1950), I, 419, II, 78; J. Wilson-Haffenden, The Red Men of Nigeria (London, 1967), 227.

38. Meek, Studies, I, 419.

39. S. Koelle, Polyglotta Africana (reprint of 1854 ed., Graz, Austria, 1963).

40. H. Smith, D. Last, and G. Gubio, "Ali Eisami Gazirmabe of Bornu," in P. Curtin, ed., Africa Remembered (Madison, 1968), 199 ff.

sold by relatives or superiors as debtors or criminals.⁴¹ Although grossly unrepresentative,⁴² this sample corroborates certain conclusions drawn from other data and illustrates the potential use of similar information. Though the categories are not equivalent -- what I call organized slave raiding could, for example, refer to either kidnap victims or war captives -- these data confirm that judicial sources of slaves supplemented forcible captures.

Disposition

Once recruited, masters employed their slaves in a number of ways, the most important distinction being between those retained for domestic use and those sold. Although the slave trade with Western Europe and the New World is well documented, little is known of the trade with the Maghrib, and there is some indication that for the Africans involved this latter trade was the more profitable.⁴³

Slaves could be traded for "currency" -- i.e., cowry shells -- or in kind.⁴⁴ As marketable items the value of slaves showed considerable variation with the slave's age, sex, and health, and with the local or international supply and demand.⁴⁵ Two sources illustrate the relative value of slaves and its fluctuation over time. When Clapperton visited the slave market in Sokoto, he found that a "prime slave" cost between 40,000 and 60,000 cowrie shells, about midway between the cost of a cow and a horse. Many years later Robinson found slaves in Zaria to be between 100,000 and 300,000 cowries. He traveled, however, after the decline in the power of the emirates and the consequent decline in their ability to recruit slaves. What remained constant, however, was the sale of slaves for currency. In addition, slaves themselves often functioned as currency; indeed, schemes to end slavery often included the introduction of gold or paper currency as an alternative to this function. Merchants sold slaves en route, either to buy necessities or to finance personal extravagances.⁴⁶ In any case, the sale or trade of slaves brought

41. P. Hair, "The Enslavement of Koelle's Informants," Journal of African History, VI (1965), 193.

42. Its unrepresentativeness derives from several factors: (1) between 60,000 and 70,000 slaves had been liberated to Freetown -- the selection of the informants was certainly not random; (2) the slaves came originally from all parts of Africa, not only from the Hausa-Fulani emirates; (3) the sample was overwhelmingly male; and (4) the sample included only slaves who had been sold to Europeans (rather than retained for domestic use). Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that a number of those listed as war captives were natives of Adamawa emirate and had been taken by Fulani. See Hair, "Enslavement."

43. See P. Curtin and J. Vansina, "Sources of the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Slave Trade," Journal of African History, V (1964), 190, for a description of the trade network which brought slaves from the Hausa-Fulani emirates into the intercontinental slave trades. See also, Smith, Last, and Gubio, "Ali Eissami."

44. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 59; Wilson-Haffenden, Red Men, 57.

45. Robinson, Hausaland, 131.

46. Mockler-Ferryman, Nigeria, 247.

considerable revenue to the Fulani emirates and also contributed to the circulation of slave personnel.

Not all movement of slaves, however, was in the form of trade or sale, for there was also an extensive system of political tributes, parts of which could be paid in slaves. According to Kirk-Greene, both the tributes themselves and the idea of payment in slaves date from the beginnings of the *jihad*, when the granting of a "flag" (signifying official sanction) was contingent upon a promise to send "a yearly deputation to Sokoto with a regular quota of slaves."⁴⁷ Though tribute often took other forms, slave tributes were common. Clapperton, for example, described the dues to Sokoto of ten emirates. Seven of these sent slaves as part of their tribute, and the emirate of Adamawa sent only slaves.⁴⁸ Though the magnitude of slave tributes is not known, estimates range as high as 10,000 slaves annually. Whatever the exact figure, it is clear that political tribute, along with the regional and intercontinental slave trades accounted for much of the personnel recruited into slavery.

Not all slaves, however, were equally susceptible to sale or alienation. An early European visitor reports the general tendency to sell only "those taken in war, or refractory and intractable domestic slaves."⁴⁹ Others report that masters sold newly taken slaves and "outsiders" or "unbelievers" in preference to second-generation slaves and Muslims (in many cases second-generation slaves had become Muslims).⁵⁰ No doubt, religious interdictions against the forcible alienation of Muslims partially accounts for this preference.

More than religious sanctions, however, protected the status of domestic slaves. Often they were integral parts of household and regional economies and political systems, and their sale would have entailed considerable hardship. This was especially true of those slaves with important domestic or military specialties. Slaves were, for example, trusted bodyguards,⁵¹ masters of agricultural villages,⁵² and army captains.⁵³ In certain emirates statute required that some office-holders be either slaves or eunuchs, each of which often had military, religious, and civil service functions, including positions both with and without attendant fiefs.⁵⁴ Slaves also performed other specialized domestic tasks, such as, for example, butcher, musician, or wet-nurse; though not indispensable, these were important household members.

More important, however, slaves were productive, and, once they had been trained, their resale and replacement would be costly. Agriculture⁵⁵ and manufacture⁵⁶ required considerable slave labor, and frequent sale of slaves would have affected both morale and productivity. In regions of low population density slave villages

47. Kirk-Greene, *Adamawa*, 129.

48. Clapperton, *Second Expedition*, 216.

49. *Ibid.*, 95.

50. Davidson, *Black Mother*, 41; Smith, *Zazzau*, 86.

51. Barth, *Travels*, II, 340.

52. Kirk-Greene, *Adamawa*, 149.

53. Smith, *Zazzau*, 100.

54. *Ibid.*, ch. 4.

55. Barth, *Travels*, II, 410.

56. Robinson, *Hausaland*, vi.

increased the effective power of an emir or individual holder.⁵⁷ The loyalty of these villages was especially important to the Fulani conquerors, who, it must be recalled, were a beleaguered minority. Even when unemployed, slaves were a source of wealth. In Kano, for example, masters freed unproductive slaves to work their own lands in return for a monthly tax to the former master.⁵⁸ It seems, then, that once a slave settled into a "gainful" occupation and performed satisfactorily, he had only a small chance of resale; the more important his occupation the smaller the risk.

Sanctions

As suggested earlier, the practice of Hausa-Fulani slavery differed considerably from New World slavery: consider, for example, the variety of social roles open to slaves in the emirates. Just as the entire notion of slavery must be redefined to include this African example, so must the notion of the sanctions supporting the slave system.⁵⁹

As with its New World analogue, strong negative sanctions supported West African slavery. Depending upon the locale, masters threatened intransigent slaves with imprisonment,⁶⁰ execution, or resale to Europeans. Since white men were commonly considered cannibals,⁶¹ this latter was an especially potent threat.

These negative sanctions, however, had only limited application. As already mentioned, alienation or execution of slaves had religious and economic consequences. More important, however, slaves could easily escape these sanctions. Slaves often lived in their masters' households⁶² or in isolated slave villages and in neither case were they closely policed. Nonetheless, and despite the fact that fugitives were rarely caught, few slaves escaped.⁶³

Escape, of course, did not necessarily mean freedom. As M. G. Smith has pointed out,⁶⁴ a fugitive slave, who might originally have come from a far-away home, may have been unfamiliar with local customs and language and might in fact have been unsure of his whereabouts. As a lone traveler he always faced the risk of recapture by slave raiders and sale into an even more unpleasant situation. Finally, slave raiders often burnt fields and villages after their raids, making a fugitive's return home, even if it were nearby, an unpleasant prospect. It is difficult to determine how effectively these factors deterred escapes, but it is clear that generally masters had little recourse to the penalties available to them and little need to guard their domestic slaves.

57. Kirk-Greene, Adamawa, 132; Smith, Zazzau, 2.

58. Robinson, Hausaland, 132.

59. Smith, "Slavery," compares the sanctions supporting Hausa-Fulani and West Indian slavery.

60. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 210.

61. Ibid., 94.

62. Mockler-Ferryman, Nigeria, 225.

63. Smith, Baba of Karo, 39 ff.

64. Personal communication.

Instead, Fulani masters relied upon positive incentives to retain their slaves. At least in part the precarious status of the Fulani necessitated this reliance upon positive rather than negative sanctions. I have already mentioned their demographic status vis-à-vis the conquered Hausa. Given their minority status and the frequency of challenges to the sovereignty of the jihad, a discontent and potentially rebellious slave population would have been intolerable. Although virtually unknown in Hausa-Fulani emirates, slave rebellions in neighboring regions inflicted terrific damage.⁶⁵ In addition, successful contenders to domestic power often relied upon the support of their slave villages,⁶⁶ and positive incentives seemed better able to rally this support.

Among such incentives, manumission seems to have been most common. Slaves could "earn" their freedom by excellence in a variety of military, domestic, or commercial tasks, and masters often freed converts to Islam as a charitable gesture.⁶⁷ Often, however, manumission made little material difference, for in a sense a slave's social mobility depended upon the status of his master. Thus, the slave of a wealthy master might become headman of a village, perhaps even passing this title to his son, or a royal slave might acquire an important governmental post. But in either case, his mobility would be within the slave status. On the other hand, little seems to have distinguished the material condition of poor freemen from that of their slaves.⁶⁸ Free status may, of course, have been an important emotional incentive.

Materially, however, the security of slavery seems a much stronger motivation to obedience and service. Masters provided their slaves with physical, fiscal, and social security in socially and politically precarious times. Masters protected their slaves from raiders and robbers, even to the extent of moving entire villages.⁶⁹ In addition, masters guaranteed their slaves' subsistence, if not abundance. Here again, the material conditions of the slave reflected in large part the economic status of his master. Treatment of slaves varied between masters.⁷⁰ Although few lived the lives of indolence attributed to the court slaves in Kano,⁷¹ even the most militant abolitionists agreed that most domestic slaves were well treated.⁷² In some cases, slaves were regarded as members of the household⁷³ and were even referred to by kin terms.⁷⁴ In return, then, for their loyalty, slaves received adequate food and clothing -- perhaps equivalent to that of their masters.

In the emirate of Zaria masters also gave their slaves vocational training, provided them with wives, and permitted them to divide their labor between their own and their masters' lands.⁷⁵

65. Clapperton, Second Expedition, 25 ff.

66. Smith, Economy, 70 ff.

67. Smith, Baba of Karo, 40.

68. Davidson, Black Mother, 37; Clapperton, Second Expedition, 139.

69. Smith, Economy, 82.

70. Robinson, Hausaland, 132 ff.

71. Barth, Travels, II, 104.

72. For example, Burns, History, 201.

73. Barth, Travels, II, 151.

74. Smith, Baba of Karo, 40 ff.

75. Ibid.

Frequently too, slaves became Muslims, adding a spiritual dimension to social and material security. Although data from no other area are so conclusive as those from Zaria, slaves in other emirates apparently derived similar material, religious, and social benefits from their masters.⁷⁶

In return for obedience and service, then, slaves might expect to be protected, fed and clothed, converted, and perhaps married. Positive incentives of this sort seem to me to have enforced the system of slavery in the Hausa-Fulani emirates.⁷⁷ In a region characterized by strife and uncertainty, masters could maintain the loyalty and services of their slaves by providing protection and subsistence. Given the precarious nature of the times, these minimal guarantees sufficed.

Summary and Conclusions

As suggested earlier, this paper has both substantive and methodological implications. From the substantive inquiry into Hausa-Fulani slavery emerges a picture of a slave system characterized by great numbers of slaves -- often outnumbering the free population -- recruited in a variety of ways. Once enslaved, many became part of an intra- and inter-continental slave trade while others settled into a wide range of domestic occupations. Finally, it appears that the masters had only infrequent recourse to violent sanctions to enforce their status, relying more often upon positive sanctions.

Equally significant, however, is the variety of sources used in this reconstruction. Documentary evidence alone permits only a partial understanding of slavery in the Hausa-Fulani emirates and must be supplemented by oral accounts, autobiographies, and ethnographic fieldwork. Nor has the present analysis exhausted the potential value of field studies. Studies of local archaeology and human geography may, for example, reveal the consequences for settlement pattern of slavery and slave raiding.⁷⁸ Though this discussion considers only the practice of slavery, opportunities are as great for the fieldwork solution of other ethnographic and historical problems.

Thus, although both local and European written sources will undoubtedly become increasingly accessible, these will not obviate the need for careful field studies. For reconstructions of African history, local "documentation," in the form of oral traditions, biographies, archaeology, and contemporary custom, clarifies points derived from written sources and can no longer be easily ignored.

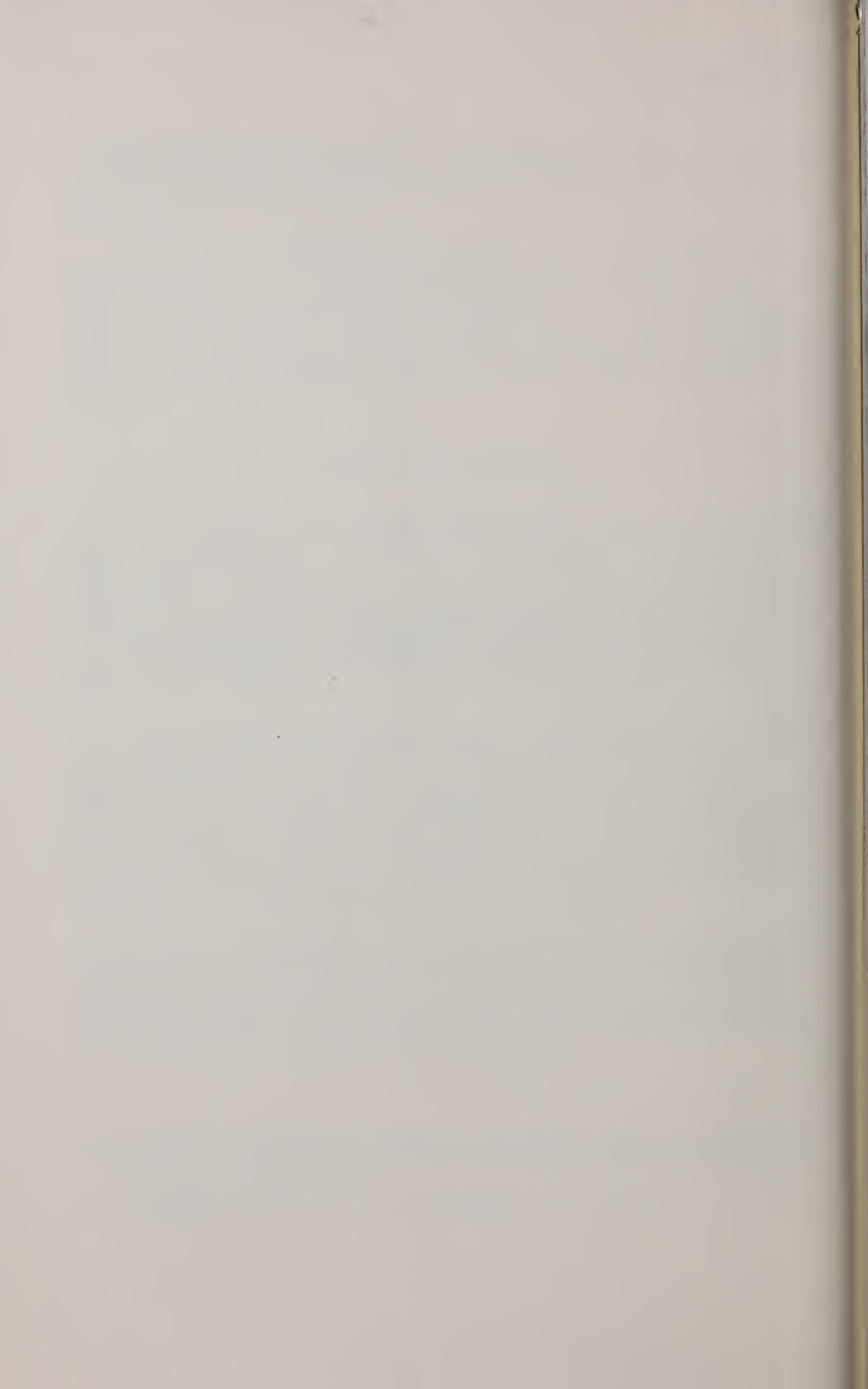
76. For example, Clapperton, Second Expedition; Robinson Hausaland.

77. In this interpretation, I follow Clapperton, Second Expedition, and Smith, "Slavery."

78. See Hogben and Kirk-Greene, Emirates, especially their discussion of Kebbi.

PART III

MODERN AND GENERAL STUDIES



FRENCH MUSLIM POLICY AND THE SENEGALESE BROTHERHOODS¹

Lucy Behrman

The subject under consideration in this paper is the policy of the French in regard to the Senegalese Muslim brotherhoods in the twentieth century. The leaders of these brotherhoods play a predominant role in current Senegalese politics, a role which cannot be understood without an examination of the historical position of the Muslim orders in the area. Of course, to understand the orders' rise to political power one must take into account the innate political potential of the brotherhoods which spread from North to West Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the specific social and economic conditions in Senegal when the brotherhoods became established. These factors, however, will not be considered here.² Nor will there be any effort to discuss the major themes of French colonial policy although this subject is a relevant background to the French actions in Senegal.³ Rather, the specific theoretical goals and practical policy of the French in regard to the brotherhoods in Senegal in the 1900's are all that will be touched on here. The goals and actions of the French illustrate the working of the colonial regime in Senegal. More importantly, however, these matters constitute in themselves a factor of importance in Senegalese political development. Some scholars have assumed that because of their brief stay, their small numbers, and their separation from the people they ruled, the colonial rulers had little direct effect on the population under their control. On the one hand this is undoubtedly true -- the French did not transform the Senegalese social, economic, and political system. On the other hand, the colonial rulers did reinforce or undermine or otherwise influence the existing tendencies in the political situation. Thus, their relationship with the brotherhoods

1. I am grateful to the Foreign Area Fellowship Program for grants in 1964-1965 and 1965-1966 which enabled me to undertake a year of intensive Arabic and background study in Boston and then to spent eight months in Senegal during which time the major part of the research for this paper was conducted. I am grateful also to Alfred G. Gerteiny for his many helpful criticisms and suggestions.
2. See Lucy Behrman, "The Political Significance of the Wolof Adherence to Muslim Brotherhoods in the Nineteenth Century," African Historical Studies, I, 1 (1968), 60-77.
3. See Robert Delavignette, Freedom and Authority in French West Africa (London, 1950); Stephen H. Roberts, History of French Colonial Policy (1870-1925) (London, 1929); and Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa (Oxford, 1964).

had an important effect on the position of the marabus (Muslim leaders) who had emerged by the end of the nineteenth century as the political leaders of various Senegalese ethnic groups, in particular of the majority Wolof.

The Theoretical Goals

The French learned from their nineteenth-century experiences in North and West Africa that Islam was an important force in their empire. Thus, they attached an officer to the Bureau Politique of the French West African Federation (the AOF, formed in 1904) whose sole job was to deal with Muslim problems.⁴ Administrators were ordered to record in detail their knowledge of all marabus in their regions. In addition, every political report sent to the Governor General of the AOF, and then to the Minister of Colonies, contained a section on Muslim affairs in the Federation and on specific problems in Senegal. In turn masses of letters and circulars went from the Governor General to the Lieutenant Governor of Senegal and elsewhere (and to the lower officials such as the commandants de cercle) outlining the way to treat the marabus. The various instructions were often contradictory and unclear so that Père Moreau, a careful observer of the situation, concluded that there was no Muslim policy.

Despite all the official declarations of yesterday the colonial authorities did not have a . . . Muslim policy. This was mostly an administrative and police policy of maintaining order and, in recent times, an electoral policy.⁵

It is possible, however, to isolate certain themes which were emphasized and which, if taken together, seem to form a quasi-coherent theoretical framework which the French officials applied to the brotherhoods.

The early twentieth-century colonial authorities were aware that their presence in West Africa had actually helped the spread of Islam.⁶ They recognized that they had contributed to the breakdown of the tribal system and thus enhanced the appeal of the tariqas. They knew that the imposition of peace on the Western Sudan had facilitated the spread of Islam by allowing missionaries to travel unmolested. Moreover, the officials had underlined their belief in the superiority over other Africans of the literate Muslims by choosing them as

4. One of the first of these was Robert Arnaud; he was followed by Paul Marty and in the twenties by P. J. André. These three men were the best known of the French authorities on West African Islam and their theories became the basis for many of the policy decisions on the Muslim question in Senegal.
5. R. L. Moreau, "Les Marabouts de Dori," Archives de Sociologie des Religions (1964), 123.
6. Robert Arnaud, "L'Islam et la Politique Musulmane Française en Afrique Occidentale Française," Renseignements Coloniaux et Documents Publiées par le Comité de l'Afrique Française (1912), 4.

clerks, guides and interpreters. Indeed, as Paul Marty, a recognized authority on Islam, wrote:

Through our administration . . . we have done more for the spread of Islam during the last half century than the marabus were able to achieve during three hundred years.⁷

But in the early twentieth century the decision was made to cease deliberate support of Islam because this religion, especially in the form of brotherhoods, constituted one of the last threats to the French West African Empire.⁸ However, open opposition to Islam was considered unwise, avowedly because the French recognized the right of Africans to practice whatever religion they chose.⁹ More importantly, the French avoided opposing Islam because they believed the persecution of Islam would have more dangerous results than had had encouragement. Persecution would provoke, "not open revolt . . . [but] the state of spirit natural to peoples of all races disturbed in their faith, the thirst for persecution . . . and a more intensive proselytization."¹⁰

French policy, then, was to be neutral, although this did not mean allowing Muslims to spread their religion as they wished. Rather, proselytization was to be restricted to prevent Islam from becoming a unified anticolonial force. The "politique des races" which had been used elsewhere in the French Empire (for example in Madagascar) was to be followed. This policy was an effort to keep separate various ethnic and religious groups. Islam, which the French saw as a religion divided into small warring sects, was to be kept divided.¹¹ Divisions between ethnic and religious groups were to be maintained by ceasing to appoint indigenous chiefs to rule over large territories since these chiefs often favored their own group and imposed their religion over the area they controlled. According to the new policy, each ethnic group was to be ruled by someone from within it whenever possible. The ethnic units would relate directly to the French administrators without the intermediary of African provincial chiefs. The cercle, with its French commandant, was to be the significant administrative unit in the AOF. The commandant would be in direct contact with the various ethnic and religious groups thus preventing any interterritorial tribal or Muslim (anti-French) buildup, as well as facilitating tax collection and other administrative tasks.¹²

7. Paul Marty, Etudes sur l'Islam au Sénégal, Vol. II: Les Doctrines et les Institutions (Paris, 1917), 374.
8. Alain Quellien, La Politique Musulmane dans l'Afrique Occidentale Française (Paris, 1910), 137; and J. Brevié, Islamisme contre "Naturalisme" au Soudan Français: Essai de Psychologie Politique Coloniale (Paris, 1923).
9. Dakar Archives, William Ponty (September 14, 1909), 19G 1.
10. Dakar Archives (May 11, 1914), 19G 1; also Quellien, La Politique Musulmane, p. VII.
11. Dakar Archives, Robert Arnaud, "Situation Générale de l'Islam en Afrique Occidentale Française," 19G 1.
12. Dakar Archives, Governor General, "Sur la politique indigène du Sénégal . . ." (September 22, 1909), 19G 1; also Governor General, Circulaire sur la politique indigène (September 22, 1909), No. 186, 13G 72; and Governor General to Minister of Colonies, "La Politique Indigène en AOF" (1912), 13G 72.

The second part of the Muslim policy emphasized that French language and cultural values were to be spread throughout West Africa. This strand of policy was connected to the French belief in their civilizing mission and maintained that Muslim culture, although superior to pagan ways of life, was inferior to French culture. Moreover, Islamic culture was seen as foreign to West Africa and Arabic was believed to be more difficult to learn for Africans than French. Furthermore, the spread of French culture would have direct political significance because the adoption of French customs would make Africans amenable to French rule and help the development of the AOF according to French plans.¹³

One of the first moves to implement the spread of French culture at the expense of Muslim customs was the attempt in 1903 to abolish the Muslim courts in Senegal. The first Muslim courts had been opened in St. Louis in 1848 (and revised in 1857) at a time when Islam was still favored by the French administrators. The courts had had jurisdiction over civil matters like marriage, inheritance, wills, and donations. The 1903 law attempted to place all Africans under the same secular French court system and end the privileged position of the Muslims who had been able to choose whether or not they would be tried by the Muslim court. However, Muslims in St. Louis protested violently that they were being discriminated against since their Muslim brothers elsewhere in French territories (i.e., North Africa) had an Islamic court system. The colonial rulers gave in to the pressure and, in 1905, a Muslim tribunal was reopened in St. Louis and Dakar, and in 1907 in Rufisque.¹⁴ However, the jurisdiction of the Muslim courts remained restricted to a small number of civil matters and only affected the inhabitants of the communes in which the courts were located. In other areas Muslims and animists alike were tried by French courts although, in cases where Muslims were involved, gadis¹⁵ were used as assessors in the French courts.

A further attack on Muslim culture in Senegal was made in 1911 when the use of Arabic in the Muslim courts and in administrative correspondence was forbidden. All judgments and correspondence were thereafter to be conducted in French. As the Governor General explained, Arabic was the principal element in the success of Muslim proselytization. Developing the knowledge of French would limit Islam and would forge:

The most sure weapon with which successfully to fight against our ineluctable adversaries: marabouts or defeated former political chiefs . . . who will not forgive us for [our] substitution of a regime of liberty and justice for the shameful exploitation of the masses by a few privileged ones.¹⁶

The greatest hope for the establishment of French culture lay in the introduction of French education in Senegal and the ending, or

13. Arnaud, "Situation Générale de l'Islam."

14. René Pautrat, La Justice Locale et la Justice Musulmane en AOF (Rufisque, 1957), 105; Quellien, La Politique Musulmane, 218-242.

15. A gadi is a Muslim who is acquainted with Muslim law (according to one of the four major schools) and who therefore is qualified to judge in a Muslim court.

16. Dakar Archives, Governor General to Interim Governor General (January 12, 1912), No. 59 bis, 17G 39.

diminishing of the number of Qu'ranic schools. Exposure to French education would lead to the "taming" of the "indigène."¹⁷ At this time in the rural areas the only formal education received came from the marabus' Qu'ranic schools. There was a large number of such schools -- in 1912 Marty estimated approximately 1700 schools in Senegal.¹⁸ But the general level of the Qu'ranic education offered was very low. Leaving aside a few exceptional marabus who were well educated, the majority of the teaching marabus had scant knowledge of the Qu'ran or Arabic. Most of them were largely preoccupied with other activities. The marabus were poor farmers or traders who lived as did their neighbors. The marabus' only advantage came from their ability to pass on a smattering of Arabic and Islam to children in return for gifts and labor. Thus, the children were sent to beg and/or to work for their teacher in his fields, and often spent most of their time in these occupations rather than in study. Under these conditions the majority of the children learned very little. Marty estimated that 95 out of 100 pupils who had finished a Qu'ranic school could not read or write or understand Arabic at all.¹⁹

The French wished to reform the Qu'ranic school system radically and, concurrently, to draw pupils into schools in which French language and ideas were taught. Thus, an important decree in 1903 declared that no one in Senegal could have a Qu'ranic school without the authorization of the Lieutenant Governor. Each marabu had to submit to the Secretary General a copy of his judicial record, a certificate of good moral conduct, and proof that he was a French citizen or subject. The necessity of such documents could exclude many marabus from teaching because many had been involved in anti-French campaigns. The 1903 decree went on to require each applicant marabu to take an examination administered by the gadi in St. Louis or by administrators advised by recognized Arabic scholars. This examination, depending on the requirements established, could eliminate all but a handful of teaching marabus since very few knew Arabic well. In addition a commission was set up to inspect Qu'ranic schools, and each marabu was required to keep a registry in French of his pupils. Since most marabus knew no French, the latter provision would have been difficult to fulfill. The marabus also had to have a certificate proving their pupils attended French schools. Most Qu'ranic students did not go to French schools, so almost no pupils would have been left to the marabus by this requirement. Finally, any school with less than twenty pupils was to be closed, which provision would have eliminated most Qu'ranic schools as these generally had well under twenty students.²⁰

In this same year, decrees were passed establishing primary schools in villages, in regions, and in urban centers, where French, reading, writing, and arithmetic would be taught. An arrêté of 1906 offered 300 francs maximum subsidy to any marabu who would spend at least two hours a day teaching French.²¹ Above the primary school level a superior primary school was established for students of urban

17. Dakar Archives, Governor General (September 14, 1909), No. 982, 196 1.

18. Paul Marty and Jules Salenc, Les Ecoles Maraboutiques du Sénégal, La Médersa de Saint Louis (Paris, 1914), 29.

19. Ibid., 32-57. Marty's criticism may have been too harsh. See Ivor Wilks, "The Transmission of Islamic Values in the Western Sudan" (unpublished paper, Northwestern University, 1968), 7.

20. Journal Officiel du Sénégal [hereafter J.O.] (August 15, 1903), 481-482.

21. Marty and Salenc, Les Ecoles Maraboutiques, 81.

areas which offered a CEP. There also were to be higher professional schools for master workers and a normal school to train teachers, interpreters, qadis, and chiefs. The latter was divided into two sections: the first for teachers and the second for qadis, chiefs, and interpreters. The second section, a continuation of Faidherbe's Ecole de Fils de Chefs (established in 1856), was attached to the madrassa (Muslim school) of St. Louis created by decrees in 1907 and 1908.²² The madrassa was supposed to train marabus and other Muslims in the elements of Arabic and Muslim law while they were also learning French and their civic duties to the colonial state. It was hoped that the products of the madrassa would gradually replace existent marabus of Senegal who were believed by the French to be ignorant and hostile.²³

The third major part of the French Muslim policy was to end the exploitation of the masses by the marabus. Foremost on the list of such exploitations were the alms collections of the marabus who openly solicited money and gifts from their followers. Traditionally the Senegalese people gave what they could to their marabu as fees for their children's education, or as contributions after harvest or when they went to ask a favor of the holy men. Frequently also the marabus would send representatives among their followers or visit the latter themselves, in order to collect money. This system constituted the worst kind of extortion to the French and had to be stopped. Therefore, part of the 1903 law regulating Qu'ranic schools forbade the marabus to send the children out to beg under the threat of immediate closure of the school if this provision were not obeyed.²⁴ In addition, in 1906 the Governor General demanded that all marabus foreign to a region be placed under immediate surveillance and reported to the central authorities.²⁵ In 1911 William Ponty stated in a circular that if a marabu with no physical incapacity should be found extorting gifts under the pretext of religion and living off alms alone he should be imprisoned for vagabondage.²⁶ The Lieutenant Governor of Senegal, M. Cor, in that same year proposed a law requiring that all public subscriptions and even private collections of money get official authorization. He stated that many thousands of francs each year went into the trunks of the marabus, money which was often used in campaigns against the French. The draining off of money by the marabus was, according to the Lieutenant Governor, a serious loss for commerce and for the economic development of Senegal in general. Local officials who had tried to fight the marabutic collections had met with little success not only because of the ruses adopted by the marabus, but also because of the "obstinate silence" of the victims, who insisted in court that their contributions were voluntary. The Lieutenant Governor's proposed law should have made it possible to end the marabus' collections, even if the donor claimed he wanted to give his money to the religious leader, for any subscription without the authorization of the Lieutenant Governor was prohibited.²⁷

22. Quellien, La Politique Musulmane, 252-256.

23. Ibid., 255.

24. J.O. (August 5, 1903), 481.

25. Dakar Archives, Governor General to Lieutenant Governor (February 10, 1906), No. 262, 19G 1.

26. Dakar Archives, Governor General, Circular (December 26, 1911), No. 117, 19G 1.

27. Dakar Archives, Decret (1911), 19G 3.

The marabus, then, were to be cut off from one of their primary sources of wealth: their collections of alms. In fact, the French fully intended to destroy not only the economic power of the marabus but all of their temporal power. The French envisaged a gradual reduction of the power of all chiefs including traditional non-Muslim leaders and marabus. William Ponty described his theory in the regard in an angry letter to the Lieutenant Governor of Senegal in whose colony the reduction of the authority of the chiefs was not being satisfactorily pursued. The letter states:

In a letter of last September fourteenth, I tried especially to define the attitude which we should adopt in regard to these chiefs. According to my instructions we should continue to surround them, as formerly, with exterior marks of honor and of consideration, acquit ourselves of the obligations which we have contracted to them, use their services in making them auxiliaries of our administration, but occupy ourselves constantly with attenuating their authority over the people.²⁸

Thus, the final and perhaps most important part of the French Muslim policy is stated. Marabus were to be used when needed. They were to be courted with medals and symbolic honors, but their power was to be continually reduced.

Had this Muslim policy been carried out, it is probably that there would be few politically important marabus left in Senegal. The prohibitions against collections, if implemented, would have removed the basic source of wealth of the marabus. The restrictions against the Qu'ranic schools would have eliminated the primordial teaching function of the marabus through which they gained respect, money, and free labor, and would have impeded the spread of Islam by brotherhoods. If the marabus, like the chiefs, had been successfully removed from all important ruling positions, they would have lost a large part of their control over the people. Finally, if the French language and culture had replaced Arabic and Muslim culture, Islam in Senegal would have been seriously weakened. In sum, French Muslim policy, if successfully implemented, should have demolished the power and influence of the marabus, restricted the area of Muslim proselytization and even undermined the faith of those who remained Muslim by orienting them to French values and morals.

Daily Relations with the Marabus

Not surprisingly, in light of their Muslim policy, throughout the twentieth century the French officials never trusted the marabus and never were sure when or where a marabu-led uprising might occur. The mistrust of the officials is shown in the continuous admonitions of the Lieutenant Governors of Senegal and the Governors General of the AOF that the marabus be kept under close surveillance at all times. These admonitions were constantly repeated in the administrative reports between 1900 and the end of the second world

28. Dakar Archives, Governor General to Lieutenant Governor (August 27, 1913), 136 75.

war.²⁹ As time went on the French gained more confidence in their ability to control the areas they governed but they still dreaded the unrest which a rebellious marabu could stimulate in a particular region. Such minor uprisings did continue to occur throughout the period. Almost every year in some part of Senegal a mahdi³⁰ would emerge with the mission of expelling the French infidels. In most of these instances the ensuing revolt was repressed quickly since the administrators wished to avoid protracted disturbances which were expensive and called down reprimands from the Colonial Office in France. Indeed, their fears of such rebellions apparently sometimes caused them to overreact to potential threats to their rule and to punish the offending marabu in an unnecessarily severe fashion. But the dispatch with which the French disposed of the rebellious marabus can be contrasted with the normal course of relations between the colonial authorities and the brotherhoods. Only when the French were forced to act, that is, when they were convinced that an uprising was about to occur, did they mobilize their strength against a marabu who then was killed or exiled while his following was dispersed.

Fode Soulayman Bayaga is one of numerous marabus who pitted himself against the French and was eliminated quickly from the political scene. Bayaga led a revolt in the upper Gambia region in 1908. He was a Sarakolle marabu who had founded a village formed of his Sarakolle disciples in an area inhabited by pagan Peul tribesmen a short time before his revolt. Already the elements of a dangerous situation were present, for his village was in an isolated district which was difficult for the French to control. Bayaga built himself a fortresslike mosque against the order of the French, who considered the action provocative. Consequently, an administrator was sent to the village and some of the Peuls were ordered to destroy the mosque. At this point the situation developed into a crisis. Bayaga, who was in Gambia when he learned that his mosque had been razed, mobilized his Sarakolle followers and marched back to his village. Accompanied by two hundred disciples, he arrived in his village, proceeded to murder several Peuls, and took their leaders prisoner. The French sent a veteran administrator to lead a military column against the marabu, and on the twelfth of October 1908 a full-scale battle took place. Bayaga and his followers were killed in fierce fighting, his disciples were scattered, and his village was destroyed.³¹

The French felt totally justified in their action since they viewed Bayaga as "an audacious bandit with a band of accomplices," a bandit who was guilty of criminal acts including murder, theft, and

29. Arnaud, "L'Islam et la Politique Musulmane," 148; also Dakar Archives: No. 982 (September 14, 1909), 19G 1; "Chapter IV" (May 14, 1914), 19G 1; "Rapport Politique du Sénégal," 2G 18.1: No. 1631 (July 10, 1918); "Rapport Politique de l'AOF," 2G 24.13; "Rapport Politique du Sénégal," 2G 39.34; "Rapport Politique de l'AOF," 2G 43.1.

30. A mahdi is an envoy from Allah. The word was broadly used by the French to denote the rebellious in their territory.

31. Dakar Archives, Letter (November 13, 1908), "Opération de police dans Haute Gambie," 13G 74 and Brunot, Letter (May 10, 1908), No. 43, 13G 74; also Telegram No. 220 (September 2, 1908), 13G 74; Telegram (September 9, 1908), 13G 74; Telegram (September 14, 1908), 13G 74; "Report to the Minister of Colonies" (November 20, 1908), 13G 74.

rape.³² Possibly the French were partially to blame for the many deaths in the final outcome since the administrator's decision to destroy the mosque could easily be construed by the fanatical marabu as an anti-Muslim coalition of French and Peul. In fact, all the criminal acts of which Bayaga was accused took place after the mosque was razed. In any case, however much the French may have been at fault, the Bayaga incident shows the manner in which the French acted when their authority was directly challenged.³³

In most cases, however, major marabus in Senegal did not choose to act as Bayaga had done, possibly because they recognized the futility of attacking the French. Therefore, the French and the Muslim leaders usually were able to cooperate peacefully (however much they mistrusted each other) as the following examples should demonstrate. One of the best known Muslim leaders in West Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was Shaykh Sidya Baba, whose actual home was in Trarza, Mauritania, but whose influences extended to the northern region of Senegal. He is a good example to illustrate the cooperative relations between the colonial administration and the marabus, because he was established firmly as a famous Muslim leader by virtue of his inherited position and his own learning and piety before he began to deal with the French in an extensive manner. Thus his behavior indicated that even successful marabus saw the necessity and the advantage to be gained from cooperating with the French.

Shaykh Sidya headed a branch of the Qadiri brotherhood (derived directly from the Qadiri motherhouse north of Timbuktu). The first Shaykh Sidya who actually founded the Qadiri branch (known as Al Kabir or The Great) lived from approximately 1780 to 1869. It was his grandson, Sidya Baba, however, who was to come into close contact with the French. He was educated in Qu'ranic traditions and sciences and was renowned for his learning. He was also respected by his disciples for his supernatural abilities (indicating his holiness). He had been known, for instance, to call down divine vengeance on a tribe which had dared to attack Sidya's own tribe.³⁴ Although Sidya's grandfather had distinguished himself in war against the French, Sidya became the "right hand" and "intimate councillor" of the French administrator Coppolani. Sidya's aid was extremely important in the pacification of Mauritania which was not accomplished until 1910 (when the warrior-marabu Ma Al Ainan was defeated).³⁵ Sidya Baba, in return for his co-operation with the French, was allowed and even helped to spread his branch of the Qadiri to surrounding areas under French control. The

32. Dakar Archives, Letter, "Opération de police dans Haute Gambie."

33. One thing which Bayaga did not do was to attack a European-led post. This was the secret dread of administrators in outlying regions which now and then did materialize. One such case took place in 1907 when a Sudanese marabu led an attack in Sénégal Oriental. The French administrator was decapitated by the marabu's followers while the marabu remained on his horse chanting verses from the Qu'ran. Dakar Archives, Administrator to Lieutenant Governor, No. 159, 13G 382.

34. Paul Marty, Etude sur l'Islam Maure-Cheikh Sidia, Les Fadelia, Les Ida Ou Ali (Paris, 1916), 16-17.

35. Ibid., 33-35, 133-142. Also reference to Sidya's role in Dakar Archives, Governor General to Lieutenant Governor (August 13, 1912), No. 1504, Dossier on Ahmadu Bamba in office of Archivist [hereafter Dossier].

French gave his representatives free passage throughout their territory and made gifts in money and kind to the shaykh. Moreover, they supported him against those members of his family who had been known to oppose him, and in this way helped him to consolidate his authority.

An even more striking example of this kind of collaboration between marabu and French, leading to the consolidation of the power of the former, can be seen by looking at the specifically Senegalese brotherhood, the Muridiyya. The founder of this brotherhood, Ahmad Bamba (1850-1927), was viewed by the French with considerable suspicion especially in the very early twentieth century. Bamba was twice exiled, once to Gabon for seven years and once for four years to Mauritania to live under the supervision of Shaykh Sidya. (Bamba returned to Senegal for good in 1907.) It would seem to have been in the interest of the French to undercut the position of this marabu and to undermine his brotherhood as a whole since it was clearly identified in the minds of the Africans with resistance to the French. Nonetheless, although the French never lost their suspicion of Ahmad Bamba whom they kept in restricted residence until his death, they still found him useful. They went to him to ask for help in controlling the action of his disciples and for specific requests such as to raise troops for the French during the first world war.³⁶ The marabu responded with obvious reluctance to cooperate in many cases, but he did cooperate.

The French were aware that by paying too much attention to the authority of the Murid founder, they would only help to increase his power. The Governor General in 1912 warned that the Murids must not be treated differently from other groups. Ahmad Bamba might be useful in recruiting soldiers, but the Lieutenant Governor (and his assistants) must be very careful not to increase the Murid leaders' authority.

We must guard equally against enlarging the role and adding to the authority of Ahmad Bamba by making our orders . . . pass through him as intermediary. We must not forget that if this indigene has a certain authority over the Murids, his influence should conserve a purely religious character.³⁷

But the French did not find it convenient to stop using the Murid founder and his subordinate marabus. As the colonialists became more confident in their power to control Bamba, they made use of him as an intermediary with even greater frequency. They openly recognized his usefulness and on a number of occasions showed him marks of favor. Thus, Bamba was named in 1916 as a member of the Consultative Committee of Muslim Affairs, a largely honorary position given to marabus known for their loyalty and service to France. In 1919 in recognition of his services during the war, Bamba was made a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.³⁸

36. Bamba is credited with recruiting four hundred troops in the Tivaouane area. Dakar Archives, F. Lanet, "Rapport Confidential sur les Mourites. . . Janvier 1914," Dossier, and F. Lanet, "Rapport du mois de Novembre 1913 sur Ahmadou Bamba," Dossier.

37. Dakar Archives, Governor General to Lieutenant Governor (November 8, 1912), No. 2099, Dossier.

38. Dakar Archives, Governor General to Lieutenant Governor (November 27, 1918), Dossier.

The choice was again put to the French of not continuing to support any one Murid marabu (and therefore not helping to build up the position of any one Murid leader) when Bamba became very old and feeble. The question at the time was who would succeed the founder. An unusually frank report in 1926 stated that position in which the administrations felt themselves placed. First, the French could stay out of the succession quarrel and allow the influential members of the family to dispute among themselves which would result in splits and divisions in the brotherhood and doubtless would reduce the order's prestige. The second choice would be to give official support to a candidate who would accept French sponsorship and follow French directions and would keep the brotherhoods as a useful adjunct of French authority.³⁹ It was apparently the second alternative which the administration chose. After Bamba died in 1927, a Murid Council met and after "a discreet intervention by the administration,"⁴⁰ chose the eldest son as khalif (head of the order). This son, Mamadu Mustafa, had been designated successor by Bamba himself,⁴¹ so it is doubtful that the French had to do more than let their support of Mamadu Mustafa be known to the Council through the French Resident in Diourbel. However, the French acted most decisively when they removed Bamba's troublesome and powerful brother, Shaykh Anta, from Senegal. The latter had openly agitated against the succession of Mamadu Mustafa since he wanted the position of khalif for himself.⁴² Eventually, in 1930, the French exiled Shaykh Anta to Mali to prevent him causing their favorite further trouble.⁴³

The French played even more of a definitive role when Mamadu Mustafa died in 1945. Another Murid Council was called, at this time made up of the surviving brothers of Ahmad Bamba, the heads of the deceased brothers' families, Mamadu Mustafa's brothers and his eldest son, and other leading members of the order.⁴⁴ The 1945 council chose Falilou M'Backe, the next eldest son of Ahmadu Bamba. It is interesting that in this instance the brother of the khalif succeeded and not his eldest son, who hotly contested the election of his uncle. According to traditional Wolof custom, the eldest brother should succeed as head of the family, but this custom had long been modified by Muslim law.⁴⁵ The precedent, then, was unclear, but Shaykh M'Backe and numerous supporters felt that he should follow his father as khalif. The French let the council know through the intermediary of the Lieutenant Governor of their preference for Falilou. They were well aware that the succession of Falilou was not according to the

39. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1926), 2G 26.10.

40. Lucien Nekkach, "Unpublished Report on Ahmadu Bamba and the Murids," Dakar Archives, Office of Archivist (classification number 1G 56).

41. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1927), 2G 27.18.

42. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1928), 2G 28.8.

43. Dakar Archives, Decret 1930, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1930), 2G 30.4 and "Rapport sur l'Incident de Diourbel (Affaire Cheikh Anta M'Backe)" (February 14, 1930), 13G 2.

44. Nekkach, "Unpublished Report."

45. Maghetar Samb, La Succession en Droit Musulmane (St. Louis), Dépôt Légal No. 1806, N.D., and Interview with Amadou Samb, gadi in Muslim Court, St. Louis, March 10, 1966. See also Nekkach, "Unpublished Report" and L. Geismar, Récueil des Coutumes Civiles des Races du Sénégal Etabli par L. Geismar, Administrateur en Chef des Colonies (St. Louis, 1933), 113-136.

principle established at the death of Ahmad Bamba. In fact, it was admitted, although not publicly, that his succession "could be considered apparently as a departure from strict neutrality."⁴⁶ However, the officials were pleased with the outcome. The only problem now remaining was to eliminate the threat posed by Shaykh M'Backe who, together with his uncle Bassiru,⁴⁷ now fought Falilou. The administration would not tolerate this opposition as they had not tolerated Shaykh Anta's. The Director of Political Affairs warned Shaykh M'Backe that he could be exiled as his uncle had been. The Director reported:

I . . . put him on guard against the intrigues which were planned and which were liable to create regrettable incidents. I warned him very clearly that we would not tolerate any agitation and that, these intrigues coming from certain of his disciples, he had all the interest in using his influence to stop them, in order that he would not be considered their originator and would not risk finding himself one day in the situation of his deceased uncle Shaykh Anta.⁴⁸

Shaykh M'Backe was forced, as a result of French pressure, to restrict his opposition to his uncle although his attitude never completely changed. The whole situation became further complicated when Senegalese politicians, seeking support throughout the countryside, sided with the new khalif or his opponents. Falilou, however, remained khalif of the Murids and was able to build his position up to one of considerable strength. Clearly, the French administration had played a very important role in his rise to power.

The trend to be discerned from the relations described above between the Murids and the French is the trend toward cooperation. This was true for the marabus as much as for the French. In the early years of the Murid order the gap between the two sides was very wide and the French scorned the Murid founder and his shaykhs. Quite probably the Murid marabus disliked and feared the French. The marabus' attitude may never have changed (that cannot be seen from the records now in existence), but they were willing to take what they could get from the French. Even Shaykh Anta, who was mistrusted by the French, managed to get favors from the administration. Thus the list of recipients of money from the administrative Fonds Secrets notes in August 1910 that Shaykh Anta had received 500 francs,⁴⁹ and certain administrators remarked in their reports that Shaykh Anta used his dealings with the French to build up his position among the Murids.

The trend toward cooperation which can be discerned from the history of the early relations between the Murid brotherhood and the French was intensified because of the emphasis which both sides placed on the importance of the growth of peanuts. From the earliest days of

46. Dakar Archives, Director General of Political, Administrative and Social Affairs, "Note pour M. le Gouverneur Général" (September 1945), 19G 2(1).

47. Nekkach, "Unpublished Report."

48. Dakar Archives, Director General of Political, Administrative and Social Affairs, "Note pour M. le Gouverneur Général" (September 1945), 19G 2(1).

49. Dakar Archives, Decree (March 22, 1913), Fonds Secrets -- see list of expenditures, 17G 24.

the movement the Murid shaykhs had encouraged their followers to grow peanuts in their fields and had established colonies of their followers on new lands throughout Senegal. Gradually the French began to realize the potentialities of the new group for the economic development of Senegal. A 1911 report had been one of the first to recognize the positive potential of the group.⁵⁰ Other reports around that time stressed the economic danger of the group. In 1906 a report noted that Shaykh Anta on the pretext of having dug a well at Gavouane, was trying to take over the neighboring territory from its previous owners, which action the author of the report apparently felt unwarranted.⁵¹ In 1913 the administrator at Diourbel warned that Shaykh Anta's concession at Gavouane was the center of a large area of deforestation which threatened wooded areas nearby.⁵² A report in 1916 repeats the warning that the Murids (in the Petite Côte) were destroying the wooded area in their search for lands on which to grow peanuts.⁵³

Despite these negative reports, the French did not really attempt to control the Murids' economic expansion. Even Shaykh Anta was able to expand as he wished and became the proprietor of vast estates cultivated by his disciples. Gradually the positive economic contribution of the Murids was more heavily stressed. Thus, in 1926 the political report noted that:

If it is possible to regret having allowed this Murid power to be established . . . it must be realized that, from the economic point of view, that action of Muridism has powerfully contributed to the so accentuated development of agricultural production in the region of Baol. And this action, which is beneficial from this point of view, forms a serious counterweight to the eventual difficulties which may come.⁵⁴

In 1927 the Lieutenant Governor wrote even more glowingly:

The Murids do not disdain material progress in any way. They are as good commercial agents as they are good farmers and speculation does not scare them. It is not among them that one risks finding that tendency to lethargy which . . . characterized certain regions of Islam.⁵⁵

The French now began actually to encourage the Murids, giving the marabus special privileges and concessions of land. Economic collaboration, particularly in the thirties, was openly pursued by the French authorities who even saw the election of Mamadu Mustafa as economically beneficial to Senegal.⁵⁶ Now and then observers warned,

50. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (May 5, 1911), No. C 577, 2G 11.7.

51. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1906), 2G 6.4.

52. Dakar Archives, Commandant of Baol, "Rapport de Novembre 1913," Dossier.

53. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1916), No. 1178, 2G 16.5.

54. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1926), 2G 26.10.

55. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1927), 2G 27.18.

56. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (September 19, 1929), 2G 28.8.

as did the 1927 report, that despite the economic contribution of the Murids, the French should be careful not to "enthroned" new Ahmad Bambas in other regions of the AOF, thus pointing out the help the French had given unwittingly to the power of the Murid founder.⁵⁷ This type of warning, however, went generally unheeded, for the French seemed most interested in increasing the production of peanuts in Senegal by whatever method possible.

The relationship which developed between the Murid leaders and the French authorities was quite similar to that between the other brotherhoods' leaders and the French. The Murids, due to an intense group loyalty and discipline, were more powerful than other brotherhoods, but in general the same cooperative pattern was established between the French and the other marabus. In fact, the colonialists were more lenient in the early twentieth century with the major Tijani marabus than they were with Ahmad Bamba, because they did not consider the Tijani as much of a threat to their authority. Thus, the Tijani (and Qadiri) marabus were able to establish themselves with the aid of the French in secure positions as spiritual and temporal leaders throughout Senegal.

The Exchange of Services

The French found numerous ways to use the marabus. One typical service which the marabus performed was to help to recruit soldiers and to give general support to the French cause. Thus, Ahmad Bamba recruited 400 Murid tirailleurs during the first world war.⁵⁸ Thus, too, Al Hajj Malik Sy, the venerable head of the largest Wolof Tijani branch in the early twentieth century, gave speeches such as the following on behalf of the French war effort:

Adhere completely to the French government. God . . . has given grace and fervor especially to the French victory. He has chosen them to protect our persons and our goods . . . My brothers, do not let yourself be seduced by the fools who say . . . "the day of the defeat of French power is coming." These are pernicious rumors. An affirmed knowledge in God shows the opposite.⁵⁹

Malik Sy reportedly also had special prayers read at his mosque for the French fighting in Europe.

An interesting sidelight to the colonial uses of the marabus to inspire loyalty to the government in crisis periods was the exaggerated (in light of the actual situation) French fear of pan-African and pan-Islamic movements. The Senegalese marabus were used as instruments to help keep such movements from forming. They were also regarded as barometers of local sentiment. Since the Senegalese marabus

57. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique de l'Ensemble-AOF" (September 22, 1928).
58. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Confidential sur les Mourites" (January 1914), Dossier.
59. Dakar Archives, Malik Sy (4 Ramadan 1330 AH, reported April 23, 1913), 19 G2. Malik Sy's Center was at Tivaouane; he died in 1922.

apparently knew very little about the rest of the Muslim world (and in any case were divided among themselves) they usually registered favorably, but the French fears did not die down over the years. The official correspondence concerning the dangers of such movements is particularly voluminous around the time of the first world war because of the German and Turkish use of Islam in the Middle East. Then, in the 1920's, the authorities were concerned greatly by the explosive Middle Eastern debate over the Muslim khalifat (although only the Syrians in Senegal seemed to be acquainted with the issue).⁶⁰ The Director of Political Affairs could write with confidence in 1940 that Muslims in Senegal were generally out of touch with the major international political currents,⁶¹ but a constant fear of the potential dangers of a pan-Islamic movement throughout the interwar period had pushed the French to depend even more heavily on the Senegalese marabus.

The single most striking example of the multiple services performed by a marabu is provided by Saidou Nourou Tall, who is still one of the most famous Muslim leaders in West Africa as a result. A two-volume book of testimonials written by thousands of officials in France and all over West Africa indicates the way he served the French. He traveled all over West Africa acting as a mediator in disputes among Muslims and non-Muslims as well. He endorsed health and sanitation campaigns, encouraged the payment of taxes, and, in line with the French preoccupation of the period, placed great emphasis on peanut production. During the pre-World War Two period and the war years themselves he gave numerous talks supporting France and French recruitment. When France fell, he adjusted immediately and began to lecture for the Vichy regime, preaching "peace, calm, confidence and faithfulness in the work of the great Marshal Pétain." When Africa was liberated, he reversed himself again and led the campaign for General de Gaulle.⁶²

In return for the multiple services performed for them, the administrative officials allowed Saidou Nourou numerous privileges, such as free travel on the railway or ships, and awarded him many honors (by 1957 he had been the recipient of twenty-four different

60. The administrators in France were apparently more concerned than their subordinates in Senegal. See the argument over a Syrian demonstration in Dakar -- Dakar Archives, Minister to Governor General (December 10, 1933), No. 305, 19G 63 (108) FM. However, even those administrators who were stationed in Senegal seemed more alarmed than the actual facts warranted. See P. J. André, "Rapport No. 2 à M. le Gouverneur Générale" (March 26, 1923); also P. J. André, "Rapport sur les tendances actuelles de l'Islam" (January 5, 1923) and "Deux Rapports du Sénégal" (March 29, 1923), 19G 25 (108) FM.
61. Dakar Archives, Director of Political and Administrative Affairs to Inspector General of Education (January 10, 1940), No. 77, AP/2, 19 G 63 (108) FM.
62. See Dakar Archives, Weygand (May 19, 1941) and other letters in untitled book on Saidou Nourou Tall (2 vols.), 19G (108) FM.

medals).⁶³ Most importantly, Saidou Nourou became identified with the power of the French. Consequently, when people wanted a favor from the administration they went to Saidou Nourou, whose intervention with the colonial rulers seemed to be effective. His stature, like that of Ahmad Bamba or Shaykh Sidya, was enhanced and he became more powerful than before. In territories where anticolonial struggles were particularly violent and bitter, Saidou Nourou's collaboration might have undermined his position. But in Senegal, where such a struggle was not widespread in the early twentieth century, Saidou Nourou's temporal power was reinforced.⁶⁴

Indeed the French had various ways of rewarding and reinforcing their allies such as Saidou Nourou. They gave gifts in money which sometimes included large amounts. Such political donations dated back to the earliest days of French colonialism and were expected to help keep the marabus tied to the French regime.⁶⁵ It became a matter of habit for families of the great marabus to expect money from the government. As late as 1946 the head of Shaykh Sidya's family

63. His honors were Grande Croix de la Légion d'Honneur, Grand Officier de l'Etoile Noire du Bénin, Grand Cordon de Comores, Commandeur de la Médaille du Mérite Agricole, Grand Officier de l'Etoile d'Anjouan, Commandeur de la Médaille de Nichan et Anouar, Commandeur de la Médaille de la Santé Publique, Commandeur de la Médaille de l'Humanité, Commandeur de la Médaille de Bienfaisance, Commandeur de la Médaille de Philanthropie, Commandeur de la Médaille des Oeuvres de la République Française, Officier de l'Instruction Publique, Officier de l'Ordre Royal de Cambodge, Officier d'Académie, Médaille Coloniale, Médaille des Epidémies, Capitaine Aumonier, Commandant de Nichan Iftikhar, Commandant de Nichan Alavit, Commandeur du Mérite Saharien, Commandeur de l'Encouragement de la République, Grand Cordon de l'Ordre des Pionniers (Liberia), Grande Croix de l'Ordre National du Sénégal, and Commandeur de Palmes Académiques. (He later received the Order of Tunisia in 1965-1966.) See Service de la Presse et de Documentation du Sénégal, El Hadj Saidou Nourou Tall. It is interesting that the Vichy regime, which also used Saidou Nourou, did not really trust him. Consonant with their harder line toward marabus, they were critical of him in a number of ways. He was accused of having relations with Morocco and Bathurst and of supporting people whose loyalty was not above suspicion. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1940), 2G 40.26.
64. Modernist Muslim groups have been very critical of Saidou Nourou Tall, because he became so identified with the French. One of the most negative notes about him comes from Guinea. In this note the authors insist that he had insulted the name of marabu by acting as a political agent for the French. Interestingly enough, one of the signatories of the note is Sekou Toure, then head of the Union Malinké. Dakar Archives, "Motion d'Indignation et Protestation," by representatives of the Groupement Sousou, Amicale de Gilbert Veillard (Foulah), Union Malinké, Union Forestière, Parti Progressiste Africain de Guinée, Victimes de Vichy, 19G (1) FM.
65. Dakar Archives, Decree (March 22, 1913), Fonds Secrets, see List of Expenditures, 17 G 24.

received 2000 francs as a political gift on the occasion of a trip through Senegal.⁶⁶

More important than outright gifts of money to the marabus was the increasing French involvement in what had been strictly intra-brotherhood affairs. Their involvement was a matter of discontent for some marabus, but individual marabus found various uses for the colonial authorities. The French became agents for the Muslim leaders, providing advice, material assistance (for certain projects), and sometimes force to settle a quarrel as in the case of the Murids' succession crisis. Thus, too, the Qadiri marabu Bu Kunta asked for French support for his son and heir Bekkai. Accordingly, when Bu died in 1914, the French were saddled with an enormously complicated succession problem. Bu had been very wealthy (he had left approximately one million francs), and his heirs fought among themselves over their rights. More than four of his numerous consorts claimed to be his legal wives (and not concubines), and several of them refused to accept Bekkai as the administrator of the estate and guardian for the minor children. Eventually, the French, with the help of Paul Marty, straightened the matter out, but not before large numbers of complaints and accusations had been ruled on by the administrators.⁶⁷

The French also became the source of authorization for mosques, which were prestige symbols for the marabus. The colonial officials were drawn into quarrels over who should build a mosque and who should become its imam (nominal leader of the parish and director of the Friday prayer). In principle they attempted to remain neutral in these matters, but in practice they gave preference to marabus who aided them. The Dakar Archives contain a large correspondence relating to the mosques, a correspondence which indicates the considerable number of transactions involved.⁶⁸ The letters also show that the French were trying to appear as the benefactors of Islam in their dealings over the mosques. Therefore, the administration frequently gave money for the mosques, although usually in small amounts. Thus, Governor General de Coppet gave 100 francs to a mosque in Medina in 1937.⁶⁹ Important marabus sometimes received more substantial assistance -- for example Ibrahima Niass, an important Tijani leader, received a fifty percent reduction in the duties on the building materials which were shipped from Dakar for his mosque.⁷⁰

Gradually, then, as the years went by, the cooperation between the French and the marabus was taken for granted. Symbolically, high government officials began to appear at important Muslim ceremonies. This had not always been the case. A political report in 1917 noted

66. Dakar Archives, Director of Political, Social and Administrative Affairs to Director of Cabinet (March 22, 1946), No. 524, 19 G 3 (1) FM.
67. See Dakar Archives, Dossier, "Succession Bou Kounta," 13G 67.
68. For example, see Dakar Archives, Lieutenant Governor to Governor General (April 22, 1909), No. 672, 13G 67; Malik Sy to Lieutenant Governor (September 2, 1916), 13G 72; Governor General to Amadou Diagne Latyr (April 11, 1938), 19G 63 (108) FM.
69. Dakar Archives, Letter No. 619 A/G (March 12, 1937), and Governor General to Administrator (March 22, 1937), No. 275, 19G 63 (108) FM.
70. Dakar Archives, Ibra Niass (March 27, 1937); Director of Cabinet (May 3, 1937); Governor General to Inspector (May 12, 1937); Al Hajj Kane (February 18, 1938), 19G 63 (108) FM.

with satisfaction that, as the marabus gained confidence in the French, they tended to stop hiding their activities and even invited the administrators to participate in their ceremonies, although a few years before Europeans were systematically excluded.⁷¹ The inclusion of French officials in Muslim ceremonies became an accepted part of Muslim life in Senegal. When in 1937 the Governor General himself appeared at Tabaski (the Festival of the Lamb ceremony), leading Muslims greeted this as a noble gesture and an honor.⁷² The Governor General appeared in order to show his administration's sympathy for Islam,⁷³ and his move was imitated by subsequent heads of the AOF. This move cemented the identification which had taken place between the marabus and the French. At every level now administrators officially were present at Muslim festivals and the major Muslim ceremonies became the occasion for important speeches in which the great contribution to Islam by the French was praised and the solidarity between the Muslim rulers and the colonial authorities underlined.⁷⁴

The Failure of the Early Policy

Clearly, the early policy adopted by the French had failed. The French had hoped to stop the spread of Islam, disseminate the French language and culture, and end the marabus' exploitation of the masses by destroying the Muslim leaders' temporal power. As far as their first goal was concerned, the colonial officials were completely unsuccessful. Islam continued to attract adherents while the various brotherhoods were able to extend their membership among neighboring Muslim and pagan peoples despite the "politique des races." Thus, membership in the Muridiyya rose from 70,000 in 1912 to 400,000 male members in 1963.⁷⁵ The number of Muslims in Senegal went from approximately 1,026,000 in 1907 to 2,798,320 in 1963, while the total African population rose from 1,120,000 to 3,110,000.⁷⁶ Even allowing for different methods of estimation in different periods -- early estimations probably exaggerated the number of people called Muslim -- the number of Muslims as well as the size of the population almost trebled.

The second goal -- the spread of French language and culture -- was to be achieved by extending French education and restricting the Qu'ranic school. But attempts to enlist the support of the marabus

71. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (July 6, 1951), No. 1811.
72. Dakar Archives, Abd el Kader Diagne to Governor General (February 25, 1937), 19 G 63 (108) FM.
73. Dakar Archives, Governor General (February 17, 1937), 19 G 63 (108) FM.
74. For example, Dakar Archives, "Report of the Tabaski Prayer" (January 20, 1940), 19 G 63 (108) FM.
75. Nekkach, "Unpublished Report"; Vincent Monteil, "Une Confrérie Musulmane: Les Mourides du Sénégal," Archives de Sociologie des Religions (1962), 88-90.
76. Louis Verrière, "La Population du Sénégal (Aspects Quantitatifs)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dakar University, 1965), 73; Government of AOF, Situation Générale . . . pour l'Année 1907 (Dakar, 1908).

in modern education schemes had limited success. The marabus discouraged their disciples from attending French schools whenever possible. Ahmad Bamba, for example, was forced to agree to pay for a school in M'Backe which taught French to Murid disciples, and had to send other taalibes to the French school in Diourbel.⁷⁷ But neither he nor his successors apparently sincerely encouraged their followers to attend French schools. Thus, the M'Backe school never received much support, even after its removal to Diourbel in 1915.⁷⁸ The French Murid school, which taught basic methods of agriculture as well as French, was received with more enthusiasm as a 1932 report indicates,⁷⁹ but it was never expanded or duplicated in other places. Nor did the French-sponsored madrassa in St. Louis flourish. It never had more than a handful of students and eventually was abolished. In 1936 Governor General de Coppet proposed the creation of another such madrassa to be combined with a national mosque which he proposed to construct.⁸⁰ But money for the school and mosque was not forthcoming (perhaps because of the war). The madrassa was never built and the mosque itself was not constructed until Senegal was independent.

The Qu'ranic schools remained virtually untouched by the administration for the strict 1903 and 1906 legislation was never implemented. Paul Marty himself had deplored these decrees as unrealistic and impractical.⁸¹ He would have continued to demand a registry of students and to encourage the marabus to send their pupils to French schools,⁸² but even his limited proposals were not enforced. It was not until the Vichy regime that there was any attempt to reform the schools along the lines proposed in the early legislation. The Vichy regime was much less tolerant of the marabus than its predecessors had been and sought to limit their activities in a number of ways, one of which was to restrict their Qu'ranic schools. The 1940 Annual Political Report echoes many of the criticisms made thirty or forty years before, thus indicating that the situation had not much changed. The Qu'ranic schools, it said, did not meet requirements of health or of intellectual achievement since the majority of the marabus were notoriously ignorant. The children were expected and forced to work for their marabu and to beg for him. They were punished by being beaten. These schools were too often "like a school of charlatanism where the pupil benefits as quickly as possible from the formulas he learns in order to sell them as talismans to the people, whom he leads thus in superstition and opposes our official teaching."⁸³

A decree was passed in July 1942 to remedy the situation sounding in large part like a repetition of the 1903 and 1906 laws. It had eight major provisions requiring: (1) administrative authorization

77. Dakar Archives, Commandant of Baol, "Rapport sur Ahmadou Bamba et les Mourides" (October 31, 1913), No. 16316 (cabinet stamp), Dossier.
78. Dakar Archives, Commandant of Baol, "Rapport Ahmadou Bamba et ses Mourides" (October 22, 1915), Dossier.
79. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1932), 2G 32.21.
80. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1937), 2G 37.1, and letter No. 916, AP/2 (June 15, 1937), 19G 63 (108) FM.
81. Marty and Salenc, Les Ecoles Maraboutiques, 75.
82. Ibid., 48, 74-86.
83. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1940), 2G 40.26.

before a school could be opened; (2) registration of all existing schools to be approved before the following January; (3) inspection of schools by the Chef de Service de l'Enseignement; (4) that no students be sent to beg; (5) that the marabu have enough monetary resources so as not to exploit his pupils; (6) that the teaching marabu be Senegalese; (7) that no Qu'ranic school be located in animist territory; and (8) that the refusal of authorization or its withdrawal be made by the Governor.⁸⁴ But by the end of 1943, the Vichy government had been replaced by the Gaullist regime. Many Vichy laws were revoked, among them the provisions for the Qu'ranic schools on the grounds that these provisions interfered unjustifiably in religious matters and trampled on tradition and religious liberty.

The laws passed in 1942 have not been followed, the return to the republican faith making it a duty for the Administration not to interfere in confessional questions and the text of 1942 attacking both custom and religious liberty.⁸⁵

Thus, the only serious effort to control Qu'ranic schools was dismissed with the Vichy regime. The French public education system also failed to do what had been planned by drawing students away from the marabus. It was true that many parents quickly recognized the profit their children could gain from knowing French and technical skills. The French schools, as a result, generally did not lack for candidates who wished to prepare themselves for remunerative positions. However, the French school system grew very slowly over the years to 1945, largely because little money was invested in it. Few Senegalese benefited from Western education and few, therefore, knew French or were acquainted with French culture.

The following chart compares the Qu'ranic schools with the French. It must be stressed that the figures are crude estimations, and, furthermore, that estimations were made differently in different years. Nevertheless, the chart indicates that the number of Qu'ranic schools continued to grow as did the number of students in these schools. The number of French schools and pupils attending them also grew and formed an ever larger percentage of the population. However, the chart shows that official efforts to restrict the Qu'ranic schools had very little effect.

One major part of the French program to stop exploitation by the marabus had been to end the collection of alms by the religious leaders. As is shown above, the use of Qu'ranic school students to beg for their masters was never stopped. Similarly, other aspects of the alms system were never brought under control. Indeed, the income from alms collections rose to large quantities for the important marabus in the following years. The Murid marabus, for example, became extremely wealthy. Thus, the commandant of Baol estimated in 1915 that in a good year Ahmadu Bamba disposed of at least 205,000 francs.⁸⁶ Forty-one years later, his son Falilou received approximately 40,000,000 francs from one single festival.⁸⁷

84. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1942), 2G 42.1.

85. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1943), 2G 43.16.

86. Dakar Archives, Commandant of Baol, "Rapport sur Ahmadou Bamba et les Mourides" (October 22, 1915), Dossier.

87. Nekkach, "Unpublished Report."

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN SENEGAL

Year	Total Population	Muslim Population	Qur'anic Schools number of schools	Qur'anic Schools number of pupils	Students Attend- ing both schools	French Schools number of schools	French Schools number of pupils
1897						27 ^h	
1906	1,290,000 ^a (1904)			12,288 ^f			4,750 ^f
1908	1,163,620 ^b	869,187 ^b		11,403 ^f			3,611
1912	1,244,048 ^c	818,145 ^c	1,385 ^g	11,451 ^g	633 ^g		
1914							4,194 ^h
1922							6,856
1930	1,900,000 ^a						7,453 ^h
1932							
1936				8,618 ⁱ			
1937			1,309 ^j	11,139 ^j			
1938			1,323 ^k	12,482 ^k			
1939			1,292 ^k	13,227 ^k			
1940			1,288 ^k	13,295 ^k			
1941	1,700,000 ^d	1,200,000 ^d	1,389 ^l	14,328 ^l	767 ⁱ		
1942	1,700,000 ^c	1,200,000 ^c	1,368 ^l	15,496 ^l			
			1,442 ^l	16,700 ^l			
			1,746 ^l	18,084 ^l			
1960	3,110,000 ^a	2,789,320 ^a		65,700 ^a			109,800 ^a

- a. Louis Verrière, "La Population du Sénégal (Aspects Quantitatifs)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Dakar, 1965), 40, 73, 84.
- b. Republic of France, Situation Générale de l'Année . . . 1908, Report of the AOF Government (Dakar, 1909), 45.
- c. Republic of France, Situation Générale des Années . . . 1910-1912, Report of the AOF Government (Dakar, 1913), 70.
- d. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal," 2G 39.34.
- e. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal," 2G 40.26.
- f. Alain Quellien, La Politique Musulmane dans l'Afrique Occidentale Française (Paris, 1910), 262.
- g. Paul Marty and Jules Salenc, Les Ecoles Maraboutique du Sénégal: La Medersa de Saint Louis (Paris, 1914), 25, 37, 40.
- h. André Villard, Histoire du Sénégal (Dakar, 1943), 210.
- i. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal," 2G 32.21.
- j. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal," 2G 34.5.
- k. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal," 2G 40.2.
- l. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal," 2G 42.1.

The French were helpless to prevent the collection of alms by a marabu from followers who lived around him or who came to visit him. The trips of the marabus would seem easier to control, but this apparently was not the case. A number of lesser marabus without important family connections were tried for the extortion of money and were imprisoned or fined,⁸⁸ but, for the most part, the French did not interfere with those influential marabus who cooperated with them. As a result these marabus, with the explicit or tacit sanction of the authorities, regularly sent their representatives or went themselves to collect offerings. An early example of such an influential marabu is Shaykh Saad Bu, a Mauritanian marabu who had helped the French in their conquest of Mauritania. He made frequent profitable trips to Senegal until 1913 when he was very old and ill and so fat that he could not enter the compartment of the Dakar-St. Louis railway.⁸⁹ His peers continued such trips over the years. The Vichy regime, in line with its harder attitude toward the marabus, attempted to control the collection of offerings, but even these administrators did not envisage an end to these trips and merely wished to restrict them. Thus, the political report of 1940 states:

Whatever may be our desire to support the material and moral situation of certain marabutic families in repayment for the services rendered by them . . . it seems proper at the present time . . . for trips of this kind to only accredit those personages really worthy of particular attention.⁹⁰

Even these efforts at control were dropped, however, when the Free French regained Senegal. The gathering of offerings remained essentially as it had been fifty years before. In fact, if the system was different, the difference was in the interest of the marabus who could travel farther than formerly on the railways in the broad areas pacified by the French and could receive free transportation.⁹¹

The final and most important aspect of the French program for the marabus was to end their role as temporal rulers in Senegal by replacing them or undermining them as political leaders. This part of the Muslim policy was never implemented. There were not enough French administrators to fill all the temporal functions which the religious leaders carried out. Moreover, the European officials remained irremediably separated from the people they governed by language,

88. Dakar Archives, Commandant of Kolda (December 1914), 13G 67.

89. Dakar Archives, Lieutenant Governor to Governor General (July 2, 1905), No. 98, 19G 3; Lieutenant Governor to Governor General, (March 3, 1906), No. 149, 19G 3; "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1908), 2G 8.10; "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (June 18, 1913), 2G 13.8; Governor General, *Rapport d'Ensemble 1913* (Dakar, 1916).

90. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (1940), 2G 40.2.

91. Not all marabus, of course, could receive free transport. A note in 1944 points out that a representative of Mamadu Mustafa had been turned down. He had asked for free transport to the Ivory Coast to see the disciples of the khalif. But the note also shows that the khalif himself, or a close relative, would have been permitted to go. All that the refusal meant was that such collections should be restricted to "marabus or close members of their own family whom the administration is interested in supporting or in encouraging their traditional prestige." Dakar Archives (April 13, 1944), No. 782 AP/2, 19G 3 (1).

traditions and thought patterns. They tended to feel themselves superior to the Senegalese, and the latter in turn viewed the French toubabs (Wolof for white foreigners) as alien to their way of life. There was no question of the French officials actually being able to replace the marabus as the recognized political leaders.

Many of the aims of the early policy, of course, were approved of by later administrators -- even after the liberation of Senegal. Numerous Western-educated officials deplored the Qu'ranic schools and especially the unlimited control of the marabus over their disciples. a control which appeared to be a species of exploitation. But the early Muslim policy failed because it actually was replaced by another Muslim policy based on a different set of priorities. In the early 1900's the brotherhoods appeared to threaten the hegemony of the French, but, gradually, as the French hold over Senegal was consolidated, the fear of the brotherhoods faded. Thus, in 1911, the Political Report could state tentatively: "An Islamic movement directed against our authority [seems to be] difficult if not impossible to organize, and, in any case, the people scarcely think of such a thing."⁹²

The administrators never trusted the marabus entirely, but the French grew confident of their ability to control the brotherhoods. Destruction of the authority of the Muslim leaders, therefore, no longer seemed as important. The brotherhoods themselves had grown more conservative since their establishment in Senegal, and this fact reinforced the impressions of the French. It now became more important to use the marabus in whatever ways possible in ruling Senegal. This became the major plank of the Muslim policy which was consistently pursued throughout the twentieth-century colonial period. The colonial officials were most concerned with running Senegal peacefully and at the least possible cost to themselves. There was little money to invest in West Africa, so the administrators made use of the resources they had, which, in Senegal, seemed to be the marabus. The use of these as auxiliaries of the French became necessary for the smooth running of the colony. Concurrently, between the first and second world wars, the tone of official comments in regard to Islam changed completely. Thus, in 1937 the Governor General wrote:

There is no longer time for doctrinaire discussions on the Islamization of West Africa . . . It is now an accomplished fact . . . [Moreover], the morale of the Prophet creates . . . a discipline . . . which constitutes against their [African] disorganization [when] confronted with European doctrines which are difficult to assimilate, a protection which it would be imprudent to ignore.

These facts make one ask oneself if it would not be better not only to maintain a benevolent neutrality in regard to Islam, but also to give it . . . active support.⁹³

92. Dakar Archives, "Rapport Politique du Sénégal" (August 22, 1911), No. 1011, 2G 11.7.

93. Dakar Archives, Governor General to Minister of Colonies (June 15, 1937), No. 916 AP/2, 19G 63 (108) FM. It must be recognized that the personalities of the Governors General (as well as the Lieutenant Governors and administrators) affected Muslim policy. For example, Governor General de Coppet probably personally favored Islam more than his immediate predecessors or successors. Nevertheless, it is still accurate to trace a liberalizing of attitude in the 1930's in contrast with the early part of the century.

In the pattern of relationships established between the French and the marabus, the marabus may have had the upper hand. In one sense, however, as the French became more involved in Muslim affairs, the marabus found themselves more restricted. The religious leaders could not do exactly what they wanted, for they were bounded by the limits of French law. If they challenged these limits as Bayaga had done, they could be destroyed. But the marabus, if they did not revolt against the French, had a considerable amount of independence. They were free to relate to their followers as they had always done. Moreover, their position was reinforced by privileges granted them by the colonial officials. The Muslim leaders were recognized by all as the appropriate intermediaries between the people and the government. The marabus, then, had strengthened their political position in Senegal by becoming allied with the French. The pattern of relations which had grown up between the French administrators and the marabus remained in force after the Second World War and was adopted by the Senegalese politicians when they took control of Senegal. Thus, the marabus remain today vital parts of the Senegalese political scene. They are important adjuncts to the Senegalese politicians, although their position is not identical with their role in the colonial period.⁹⁴

94. See Lucy Behrman, Muslim Brotherhoods and Politics in Senegal (Cambridge, Mass., 1970) for a detailed discussion of the modern period.

CHAPTER 11

ISLAMIC INFLUENCES ON POLITICS IN MAURITANIA

Alfred G. Gerteiny

Unlike most other African states, Mauritania's most crucial and vexing problem is not primarily one of economic development, although economic development is indeed a source of preoccupation to the leadership of this country; it is, rather, tribalism and racialism and the impact these have on the nation's aim for social, political, and economic cohesiveness. If tribalism and racialism, however, fetter such cohesiveness, Islam provides it with a tool which, if used judiciously, may more than counterbalance its negative impact.

Mauritania's leadership, therefore, must at all times be conscious that everything of national importance is conditioned by the racial and cultural factors and that any development, be it positive or negative, within such a sphere, has portentous incidences on the national level and, potentially at least -- because of the role that Mauritania played in Islamic proselytizing since the tenth century -- on the regional one as well. While the importance of this statement could not be overemphasized, it would appear meaningless without a brief description of the conditions from which it draws its pertinence and which clearly exert a significant influence on Moktar Ould Dad-dah's thoughts and political behavior. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is, with nearly 419,000 square miles, one of Africa's largest states, in fact a large one by any standard, but it is one of the more sparsely populated -- about 1,000,000 inhabitants.¹ The Mauritanian Republic is not an historic state, though its tribes and its ethnic and racial components have their own particular histories sung by ighwiyun, or bards. Nevertheless, should Mauritania withstand the rigors of present-day politics and grow in stature within the community of nations, then the sum total of these histories would combine, providing both historical roots and cultural richness to the new state, cementing and reinforcing its emerging social and political institutions.

Mauritania's social, economic, and political condition and development, in short the substance of her current history, is conditioned by geography, which stands both as a constructive and

1. The 1959 official French census estimated Mauritania's population at 655,657 inhabitants. In 1964, the Mauritanian government's estimate showed 1,200,000 inhabitants. Experienced Mauritanian observers, however, generally refer to 850,000 inhabitants. See République Islamique de Mauritanie, Bulletin Statistique et Economique (Dec. 1963 - Jan. 1964) for Mauritania's population estimates.

destructive factor to the process of nation building. Geography has also shaped the country's ethnic composition and the traditional social structures of its humanity, influenced its pre-national history and dictated inter- and intra-racial relations -- so important in the determination and direction of the new country's political and philosophical perspectives.

Situated between the 5° and 17° west longitude and the 16° and 27° north latitude, Mauritania belongs, geographically (as do her four sister states: Mali, Niger, Chad, and Sudan), to Northern Saharan Africa and, therefore, in a way, to the Middle East and to sub-Saharan Africa -- thus to Black Africa, also. Ethnically and linguistically, Mauritania's inhabitants include Hassaniya-speaking² Bidan (white) Moors, Hassaniya- and/or Zenet (Berber)-speaking Zenaga tributaries, and lower caste Sudan (black) Moors,³ as well as a variety of negroid minorities, Lekwar (sing. Kewri),⁴ whose tongues and traditions are intrinsically African. Clustered on the northern shore of the Senegal River, below the seventeenth parallel, the Lekwar form nations within the state and move freely into Senegal and Mali -- the countries of many among their relatives -- a situation which makes them quite elusive to governmental authority.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania may thus be described as a multiracial state, a pluralist society that has not yet jelled, an amalgamated nation -- not a nation in the accepted sense of the term. In this respect, Mauritania shares similar characteristics and problems with other African unhistoric states. What distinguishes her from most other African nations is that her populations include caucasoids and negroids, both conscious of the color bar and both harboring prejudices that have for centuries aggravated the normally uneasy relations found among various ethnic and racial groups and even among tribes in a primitive setting. Nevertheless, the age-old cultural, historical, and political interaction among this ethnically and racially diverse tribal population has produced a faint religious bond manifested in the relatively similar character of their Malakiist Islam. This single national bond, however, is threatened by the gradual generalization of modern education and its eventual result -- secularization.⁵ The absence of a monolithic Muslim institution,

2. The Hassani Arabic dialect, spoken in its purest form by the educated monastics (zawya, Fr. Marabout tribes) shows striking similarities in vocabulary and accent to the Arabic spoken in the northern hilly countryside of Iraq; actually the Hassaniya is fraught with Azer and Zenet. It was introduced in the Mauritanian hinterland by the Bani Hassan, a Yemeni tribe, in the sixteenth century, following three centuries of isolation in the Wed Dra' area (southern Morocco).
3. The Sudan are not necessarily blackskinned; they form a variety of castes. This traditionally rigid system has for centuries frozen social mobility. Mention must be made here of the 'abidin (slaves) as well as of the harratin (freedmen).
4. The Lekwar include some 130,000 Halphoolaren (Tukulors), 65,000 Sarakoles, 20,000 Fulbe and 10,000-15,000 Wolofs and Bambaras. All these societies are highly stratified.
5. Malikiism in Mauritania combines with Sufism and Maraboutism; these in turn are influenced by traditional pre-Islamic beliefs, superstitions, and magic. What emerges is a particularist Islam distinguishable in its character and varying in its multiple manifestations. Three main turuk flourish in Mauritania; they are,

indeed the diversity of Islam in Mauritania, manifested by the multiplicity of turuq (ways; restricted and often secret brotherhoods), the jealousies among their leaders and their struggle for political influence while fettering national cohesion aid in the preservation of the state through an intricate power-balancing process the success of which depends almost exclusively upon presidential political finesse.

There really exist two different worlds in Mauritania, neither willing to lose its identity by assimilation to the other or by regional political regroupement unless, and even then many reservations exist, Saharan and sub-Saharan entities participate in it, preserving the delicate racial balance. Indeed, the relative order and security achieved by the French colonization is deeply appreciated, particularly by the negroids. Moreover, security, not necessarily peace, was established in Mauritania by the passage of the loi cadre and the subsequent period of independence⁶ was greeted by a placid and resigned people but hardly by a homogeneous or harmonious Mauritania where social hierarchies and ethnic and racial cleavages, suspicions and psychologies had survived,⁷ aggravated by a then imperceptible, dislocating factor inadvertently created through France's attempts at universalizing her culture and reinforced by the nature and magnitude of local oppositions to the spread of this culture -- the emergence of an educated elite drawn mostly from the least privileged strata.⁸ The political and economic problems posed by Mauritania's emergence as a sovereign state and the threat to its continued existence by Moroccan irredentism⁹ minimized, however, the importance of such sociological revolution during the first three or four ensuing years.

by order of importance, the Qadiriya, the Tijaniya and the Shadeliya. These are further irrevocably splintered by the personal Qur'anic interpretations of the Murabitin (Marabouts) in their search for virtue and salvation. Furthermore, in this pursuit they tend to follow a traditional personalist tradition adding to it innovations of their own. As religious leaders they hold unlimited power and are often considered as intercessors between the faithful and God. Such power has, historically, often been challenged by their rivals.

6. Mauritania was proclaimed independent on November 28, 1960; internal autonomy, however, had been enjoyed since 1958.
7. For a full description of Mauritania's society, see Alfred G. Gerteiny, Mauritania: A Survey of a New African Nation (New York, 1967).
8. While cooperation among Mauritania's populations was fostered by the introduction of French as a vehicular language, the ministering of modern education was unintentionally unevenly distributed by the colonial administration as the children of tributaries, freedmen, and slaves were quietly substituted by the aristocratic classes in an attempt to "preserve their own children from the evil effects of the infidels' teaching." Such practice was common both among Moors and Lekwar. On the other hand, the latter being sedentary as opposed to the nomadic Moors, more sustained contacts with the colonizer led to a numerically more important spread of modern education among them -- thus the seeds of a social revolution were inadvertently sown.
9. For further discussion, see Kingdom of Morocco, Minister of Foreign Affairs, White Paper on Mauritania (Rabat, 1960), and R.I.M., La République Islamique de Mauritanie et le Royaume du Maroc (Paris, 1960).

The man upon whose shoulders political responsibility was vested, Maître Moktar Ould Daddah, well-born member of the monastic Wlad Berri tribe, seemed to have realized from the outset the enormity of the task of building a modern nation in Mauritania when he decided on the choice of its juridical name, "The Islamic Republic of Mauritania." Indeed, the Islamic epithet was judiciously added as a permanent reminder of the common heritage and bond upon which a nation could be built. Timid, retiring, introverted, and docile, pious and intensely human are perhaps his most outstanding characteristics and those which made him most suitable for the highest office in Mauritania and most acceptable to the French who wished to maintain a certain influence there as well as to the Mauritanian traditional leadership who sought to preserve, even to augment, their influence. Moreover, he is a French-trained jurist (then the only one in Mauritania) and a Muslim scholar with a pronounced ability to reconcile divergent viewpoints; a consummated arbitrator -- exactly what Mauritania needed.

Ould Daddah's traditional Islamic education and his modern French training pervade his philosophical being and such ambivalence is evident in all his actions and thoughts. Allah's Qur'an and Montesquieu's Esprit des Lois are his most constant references. His government is both Islamic and Republican; the first attribute does not necessarily connote intolerance nor does the second necessarily imply democracy. In fact, "Islamic Republic" carries a contradiction similar to that suggested in "Catholic University."

Moktar Ould Daddah is not prone to theorizing; nor has he, since assuming office, found leisure to think out or conceive an elaborate personal theory molded to the physiognomy of his people and their particular circumstances. The absence of systematic philosophical works does not, however, necessarily imply an absence of philosophical thought and his political ideas and philosophy of history must be culled from less formal and direct sources, adding to their authenticity and richness. As a pious Muslim issued from a tribe of monastic tradition in a desert milieu, religion -- Islam -- pervades his way of thinking marking his attitude toward life, the nature of man, his purpose on earth, and his ultimate destiny, as well as his attitude toward history and government. As a Moor, however, his Islam, though orthodox as to its basic tenets and Malikiist as to its jurisprudential appertinence, is marked by a series of long digressions evolved through centuries of independent development ingeniously molded to suit the particular circumstances of a singular milieu, its heritage and requirements. Indeed, Moorish Islam has a character of its own, traditional reformism, and a peculiar maleability to political and sociological imperatives.

Islamic eschatology is omnipresent in Moktar's mind but it does not necessarily lead to classical negative Islamic fatalism. And though Ould Daddah subscribes to providentialism, there is much room left in his philosophy for a determinant free will. In fact, it is this happy blend of rationalism and spiritualism that makes for his enlightened realism toward both the past and the future as history. The following sentence is most illuminating in this context; Ould Daddah often uses it to close his speeches and in discussions: "May Allah aid us to persevere in the way we have traced for ourselves." Ould Daddah's philosophy of history is dialectical and therefore Muslim in form. Substantially, however, it reflects the intense

political insecurity so characteristic of Africa's new nations but in its Mauritanian complexion. As do most rational and total historical projections, it seeks universal order, harmony, and peace.

In this context there is a dialectic of insecurity¹⁰ in Ould Daddah's mind which is environmental and traditional, historical and experiential; in a simplified three-level form, proceeding from the basic Mauritanian family unit, the tent, as a thesis which, though offering an admirable example of group solidarity and mutual help is quite insecure in a desert milieu, he moves on to the less insecure antithesis of the fraction and from there to that of the tribe as the synthesis. From that synthesis the second level of the dialectic of insecurity takes off with the tribe as the thesis, the ahel (confederation) as the antithesis, and the nation as the synthesis. Similarly, the third level would give us the following picture, the one that refers to Ould Daddah's historical projection, with the Mauritanian nation as the thesis, African Unity as the antithesis, and world unity as the synthesis insuring world peace. In the same vein, Ould Daddah's cry, "Faisons ensemble la Mauritanie," basically a call on the tribal and ethnic entities within Mauritania to work together for the preservation, in fact for the creation, of the nation, rebounds theoretically into two distinct echoes: the first one, following national consolidation, being "Faisons ensemble l'Afrique," an achievement which would insure the integrity of his borders and eliminate African claims to it while eradicating the centrifugal forces of racial origins from within -- similarly, this would ultimately reduce the threat of neocolonialism in Africa -- therefore, in Mauritania; the second one, "Faisons ensemble le Monde," seeks completely to eliminate neocolonialism and prevent international aggression and its consequences at home, insuring perpetual peace and cooperation on a humane level and without the lure of nationalistic gains. All this serves to emphasize Ould Daddah's great preoccupation with survival in Mauritania, stressing what may be called his "enlightened nationalism." His basic problem, nevertheless, in the present and immediate future remains to create a Mauritanian nation. To this end he seeks the utilization of, rather than reliance upon, Islam; of precolonial and colonial experiences as well as his personal academic acumen and administrative background. "May God aid us to follow the way we outlined for ourselves; building a stronger and happier Mauritania within a free and united Africa and thus participate in preserving world peace" (November 28, 1964).

With independence gained in 1958 and due to the lack of a better alternative, Islam emerged as a living ideology in Mauritania, a national, intertribal, interethnic, and inter-tariqa bond. The legitimization of Islam as the national religion and culture in Mauritania; indeed, the confirmation of this fact through the incorporation

10. While generally one may speak of the existence of a dialectic of peace, it must be stressed that such dialectic has a motivating variable relative to the valerian or valetudinarian character of nations. Indeed, although the ultimate desire -- peace -- is singular, the former group of powers seek assurance of peace while the latter insurance of peace. Hence, it might be more useful to contrast the dialectic of security of the first case with the dialectic of insecurity in the second.

of the Islamic qualification in the official title of the state -- The Islamic Republic of Mauritania -- betrays the otherwise frail basis for unity in Mauritania. Islam in the government of Mauritania, in spite of this, is only a political subterfuge, and the Islamic character of the Republic does not imply any conformity with the classical conception of the Islamic polity. And while it suggests that republicanism in Mauritania must be mindful of the Islamic heritage, so important as a national bond, it suggests also that Islam must accommodate modern realities.

Religion is an important factor in the state but it does not alone give its content to the state, not even to an Islamic state. The law of the state is derived from religion but the state abstracts itself in practice from the whole compass of its validity and follows its own aims. Human need and effort have founded the state as a necessity, and it exists for man. God helps him, enlightens him, and directs him.¹¹

Ould Daddah evokes the past glories of the Almoravid with some detail in many of his public pronouncements and mentions in general terms the historical achievements of the Arabs, the Berbers, and of the Mauritanian racial minorities, reminding his listeners that the sum of these experiences constitutes Mauritania's past. He even often speaks kindly of the colonial period as an integral part of his nation's history. Indeed, while he rejects colonialism today, he considers it to have been a constructive step toward the creation of Mauritania. His speech is carefully balanced to give credit wherever due and to instill a national historical feeling within his constituents. His references to past history appear as an incentive to rejoin greatness once more but to rejoin it "together" and, therefore, differently. He avoids the divisive factors in the histories of his people and emphasizes modern reality and present necessities, urging the Mauritians to adapt and interpret past concepts and to evaluate past history only in this light.

As its temporal patrimony, the spiritual patrimony of Mauritania shall be preserved. Our country which did so much in the past for the radiating of Islam remains imbued of Muslim civilization. But faithful to our humanist tradition, we repudiate sectarianism and affirm the spirit of tolerance which inspired our constitution.¹²

The past, therefore, may have been good and it is important to look back to it and consider its validity but in its own perspective; it is a period that has spent itself and could no more be revived in its original form nor must it be imitated. Thus the past is only important when it could be used to service the present, and it is evil if it claims to control and direct the present, if it claims precedence to it or stands as a perspective future. There is, then, almost an apologetic to Mauritania's history with a negation of the traditional biological concept of history as attributed to Caliph Omar. Instead, Ould Daddah's concept is organic and, by order of priorities, national, continental, and universal:

11. Moktar Ould Daddah, speech, November 28, 1960.

12. Ibid.

If our human groupings represent living entities with particular vocations [then] we shall superimpose on them a single entity capable of summarizing them all: Mauritania. To the forces of distortion [and division] be they from the north or the south we shall substitute, with our unanimous will, a single overwhelming idea, a single ideology: the Mauritanian nation. . . . a Mauritania within a free and united Africa [participating] in preserving world peace.¹³

He has what may be called a cosmic view of history, explaining historical vicissitudes in terms of distinct revolutions or phases of "light" or day, depicting glory and of "shadow," darkness or night, corresponding to gloom. Nevertheless, the nature of the phase is interpretative and variable not only in time but also according to its utility and in terms of its ultimate significance -- evolution. This intellectual or rational, as opposed to romantic or emotional, view of history is characteristic of Ould Daddah's duality of mind -- Ould Daddah the modern African utilitarian and Ould Daddah the moral relativist student of Montesquieu.

Thus, French colonialism is referred to as a phase of darkness in the history of Mauritania but an important, positive factor in the creation of the nation. "The result of half a century of French presence in Mauritania is foremost the unity of the fatherland. It is also a series of realizations that allowed us to progress in all domains."¹⁴ Similarly, Mauritania's traditional tribal and racial past was a phase of light because it meant freedom and self-determination; this represents today, however, a negative centrifugal factor to nation building. In Ould Daddah's view, man was created essentially good; but as a free willed individual in a world of good and evil, he is both subject to and capable of evil. Evil and malefic influences may be of natural or supernatural origin. He is a political being by nature, with animal instincts and a God-given conscience. All men are equal before God and before the Law, but circumstances of physical and intellectual character have, in time, established distinct traditions and disrupted this equality. Ethics and true religion must strive to reestablish, in time, equality among men. Such endeavor will have long-lasting effect if performed through education and exemplary attitudes. Only thus will the psychologies of the master and of the slave be transformed and the original designs of God attained. It may thus be said that Moktar Ould Daddah's doctrine includes both causality and natural law and, in this sense, it conflicts with some interpretations of orthodox traditional Muslim theological views; nevertheless, it is essentially similar to the emerging in the Sunnat Allah so often appealed to in the Qur'an.

Environment, pre-Islamic, Islamic, and colonial heritage in western Saharan regions have combined to help mold particular natural orders and definite traditions and characters, the legitimacy of which is only circumstantial and temporal, sociological and political. Thus desert conditions and historical circumstances gave the Moor his characteristic individualism; they have helped since his tribalism and factionalism; they were propitious for the conception and elaboration of laws governing man's relationships to man, institutionalizing the

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

ghazi and condoning looting, encouraging slavery, servitudes, dependencies, and exploitations of man by man. But these times, these circumstances have spent themselves; their creatures must be revoked without requital but with a full appreciation of their causes and intentions. Here again, Ould Daddah's moral relativism is reminiscent of Montesquieu. He sees no contradiction between his respect for tradition and freedom from it; he is neither a revolutionist nor an evolutionist; he is a revulsionist. Unlike the traditional Muslim philosophers and historians, Ould Daddah is not content to summarize in general terms the historical process, but, like Ibn Khaldun, he attempts to explain it.

From the providential physical isolation of men, not only from the world yonder but within what is now called Mauritania, from one another, a social order was created in which individualism, tribalism, factionalism, rigid caste systems, hierarchism, racism and slavery combined, tempered, and harmonized by Islam and the word of God to help man subsist. Society, therefore, exists by man and for him; it defines his attitude as well as his liberties rather than confining them; it creates balance and harmony. The individual exists neither by himself nor for himself. Men organize in a society through which their freedoms and liberties are returned and asserted. In this way, the individual fashions and serves a society conceived to serve him in the fulfillment of his destiny; a balance emerges insuring order and security.

The Mauritanian has thus subsisted within a primitive setting in a form of society that has spent itself. The balance and harmony of yesterday spell imbalance and chaos in modern Mauritania; the restrictions imposed on the individual under the primitive order and the traditional relationships between the individual and his society, although they insured order and security, spell, today, disorder, insecurity, and injustice. The individualism so traditional to the Moor is seen today as disruptive to progress, to the creation of a Mauritanian society fashioned to meet the requirements of the modern world. Thus the ills of the nation appear to be "tribalism, individualism, regionalism," all inherited from the colonial system.¹⁵ From the beginning in his first speech as the leader of Mauritania, Ould Daddah indicated the necessity for change and hinted that a whole new system of relationships must be conceived to allow for the unity and growth of the nation and to prevent its dismemberment as well as its annexation by neighboring nations. He did not, however, implement his ideas on the subject until 1963, when he incorporated them in a vigorous program aiming at the transformation of society as well as the role of the individual within it. Many reasons may be advanced to explain this phenomenon; first Ould Daddah waited until he felt more secure at the helm of government; second, he gave himself enough time to study his country, its resources, and potentialities both through direct contact with the people and the various regions of the land and through the various surveys conducted by foreign specialists working for his government; last, but not least, he gave his people enough time and opportunities to realize that neither the traditional system nor the one inherited from the colonizers were suited to the national circumstance. This is one of the main indexes of Ould Daddah's revulsionist political philosophy.

15. Opening speech by Ould Daddah, Conference of the Cadre of the PPM, Kaedi, February 1964.

Mauritania had to breach a 2000-year gap with the modern world; this could not be achieved without a clearly defined plan or by a well planned program only, but through the "mobilization of all the living energies of the nation," as he so clearly states over and over again. Moktar's attack on individualism may be misleading. It is not, indeed, against individualism per se that he stands. In other words, he is not seeking a totalitarian society. He stands against the type of "rugged individualism" that was descriptive of the opening of the West in the United States, against lawlessness and organizations that escape the law of the land; his stand is against the individual's taking of the law in his own hands and using it for his own selfish purposes. In his opinion, Mauritania could not be granted the privilege of time to become a nation. Time, indeed, works against the creation of a nation unless it is properly used and unless energies are channeled according to a master plan. Both the individual and the collectivities, in what is today Mauritania, are self-ordered in a fashion that is still not nationally conscious. Their interpretation of history is biological, not organic. It naturally developed from particular environment and circumstances now negated. It does not answer modern exigencies. Ould Daddah's concern with the explanation of the inadequacies of the traditional regime are both symptomatic of his attachment to Islam -- specifically of his endeavor to reconcile the ideals of the Shari'a with the facts of history -- and of his revulsionist tactics. Revulsionism may be described as an attempt to bring about a realization among people of the need for change for the purpose of enlisting their support in the process of change rather than imposing change from the top down as would be the case in a revolution. It is a flagrant attempt at preserving the concept of ijma' so important in Islamic political and juridical tradition.

Ould Daddah does, indeed, want the individual to be associated with the government. He wants him to be an organic part of the society in which he lives. But he realizes the dangers inherent in such association without benefit of education and of knowledge. He also realizes that calling for reforms and change and modernity could be meaningless without the ultimate understanding of these terms by the individual -- without the will of the individual to implement and support the President's policies.

The individual remaining in his traditional milieu could not possibly conceive of a different life, of different ways, of different possibilities without an example -- thus Ould Daddah's studied policy of sending, on a rotating basis, individuals on missions abroad, who obviously do not possess the qualifications for fulfilling political or diplomatic assignments. The intent of such journeys is to bring about a realization at the grass-roots level of what a modern state and a modern society is and what its achievements may be.

Ould Daddah's concept of the relationships between individual and society have, according to this writer, remained basically constant since he took office. What has changed are the means the President has ultimately devised to effect cooperation between the individual and the government. From the outset, he attempted to mobilize his people toward the goal of nation-making and nation-building. He appealed to the various political parties to fuse into a single comprehensive party in which one and all would concentrate efforts to this end. The fact that political parties were at first tolerated though discouraged does not imply that Ould Daddah believed in the Western concept of democracy at first, although a case could be

made to this effect. It means, rather, that he had not judged the time opportune to enforce one-partyism in Mauritanian politics. After a brief experience in multi-partyism during which he hoped that its impracticability would become obvious to the Mauriticians, he turned vigorously toward building a single party democracy patterned after similar examples found in Africa, particularly in Guinea and Mali. The argument used to support one-partyism in Mauritania was, again, based on circumstantial exigencies. Just as he had systematically attempted to convince the people of the necessity of turning away from the traditional past because of its incompatibility with the modern concept of nationalism, he attacked party politics as unrealistic in modern Mauritania:

The Mauriticians have understood this fundamental exigency (political unity above all) when, beginning in December 1961, all existing parties fused to give birth to the PPM.

The Mauriticians then became conscious, following a full year of independence, that the hour of reconciliation had arrived for all and that all energies were to converge toward a single goal: national construction. Until the birth of the PPM, our country had known only one kind of political party (that which only wakes up and stirs the people in electoral times). The Unity Congress of December 1961 had condemned this type of political party to death and decided to substitute for it a mass party -- in other words, a party in which first place is accorded not to the individual candidate and then to the elected one, but to the people -- to the mass of citizens. Unfortunately, the ills plaguing our political structures were not to disappear so easily. We have to transcend a double past. A traditional past, first where the only structures were the tribe, the fraction, and the village, all animated by the spirit of clannishness; a colonial past, second, which bequeathed upon us other structures ill adapted to our realities, among which were political parties playing the game of democracy; such were the two obstacles that had to be surmounted by the infant PPM -- a difficult task demanding determination and perseverance. Two years passed without victory over either of the two obstacles [to national unity]. A necessary and healthy crisis thus developed, which I was thereupon empowered by the National Political Bureau to solve.

I decided to convoke a conference of the cadres of the Party which, during its inaugural session was transformed into an extraordinary Congress. This was the Kaedi Congress of January 1964, which one might already term as an historic one.

Briefly, these were its decisions: to fight against clannishness while divorcing [the nation] palpably from the traditional [political] schemes withheld by France and by other Western countries.¹⁶

This argument, in fact, does not merely attempt to justify a policy by explaining its reasons; it strongly implies that the new policy was dictated by the common will. It is not only the substance of the speech but its form as well that suggests that the President

16. Moktar Ould Daddah, speech, November 28, 1964.

is not his own agent but that he is acting in the name of the people. The Constitutional injunction to the President to present a yearly "Message to the Nation" (Art. 43) in which he explains his government activities and aims is not indicative of any kind of adaptation of Western political democratic practices, in spite of close similarities to the annual American message of the President to the nation. But it reflects a modern adaptation of the traditional Muslim political concept of ijma'.

There is much in Ould Daddah's political philosophy that is wittingly or otherwise derived from the political philosophy of Ibn Khaldun and, therefore, much in Ould Daddah's thought stands in contradiction to the teaching of the falasifa who belonged to the same school of jurisprudence -- Malakiist. This is particularly true of his view on the relationship between the individual and society or government.

Ould Daddah cannot conceive of polity without social solidarity; to him the lack of social solidarity spells chaos, and multi-partyism in Mauritania, in his view, was disruptive of social solidarity; it was, also, totally alien to Mauritania's experiences:

Polity [mulk] is the natural result of social solidarity ['assabiyyah]; it cannot occur as a matter of preference [iradah] but is solely the consequence of the necessity and order of existential reality . . . Laws and . . . many other things that men may be engaged upon require solidarity, since otherwise their object will not be attained.¹⁷

There is an implication in these words of Ibn Khaldun that without solidarity on the means to attain a specific goal, that goal will not be attained. This represents very accurately the philosophy of Moktar Ould Daddah in reference to party politics. Indeed, he considers that Mauritania's circumstances and past history are not conducive to a natural 'assabiyyah'. The subsistence of nations, tribes, and fractions, as well as of outmoded systems of social hierarchies within Mauritania would ultimately lead by the sin of pride, of greed, and of luxury, anathematized by the shari'a, to centrifugalism -- the opposite of solidarity -- and thus prevent the attainment of the immediate goal which is national unity -- even if such goal were solidly agreed upon. Ould Daddah's rationale is that the most important and immediate goal of Mauritania is the "construction of the nation." Since, therefore, a national society (nation) does not exist but is being constructed, how could the individual be left free to operate and have a normal relationship with a nonexistent entity. The individual is, therefore, called upon to deal with a theoretical society or an abstraction, something that is beyond the appreciation of the average citizen. Until, therefore, the individuals at large could, through education and example, learn to understand the problem with which they are faced, the government will have to rely exclusively upon a restricted representative common will, an elite capable not only of understanding the situation but willing to labor solidly within it. Meanwhile, all efforts will be made to enlarge the circle of this elite ultimately to include all individuals. Once national construction is achieved, then a re-evaluation of the system of relationships between individual and the state or nation will become

17. Ibn Khaldun, Abd el-Rahman, Muqaddimah (Beyrout, n.d.), 202.

necessary. If Ould Daddah were to edit Ibn Khaldun's words on the common good and happiness, they would read as follows, with the President's words in parentheses:

The situation concerning the good (of the Mauritanian nation) is that it is, in reality, achieved through preference and will (of a knowing and solidary elite) and therefore (Mauritania is capable of becoming a nation and) achieving happiness; and that (Mauritania) which seeks, in the association of its (elite), cooperation in those things which lead to (the construction of the nation and therefore) to happiness (and the common good) is truly the ideal (Mauritania).

In his own words, Ould Daddah has put it this way:

Similarly to all underdeveloped countries, Mauritania realizes the urgent necessity of [conceiving] a political system cut to its needs. She cannot adopt in their integrality either the regime of the liberal democracy of the Western world, or the totalitarian regime of the Communist countries for the simple reason that she does not possess any of the means required by [either of] these systems. Our country, in fact, is in a state of war against centrifugal forces breaking the construction of the nation and against underdevelopment which maintain our people in [a state of] misery and ignorance.

Our essential and immediate task consists in creating a veritable political elite which, in turn, will create a true public opinion and insure the stability of our economic options.

Until, therefore, a true and enlightened public opinion is created within a true nation, only the party's opinion will be considered as the voice of the nation, because at this juncture of the country's history there is only an embryonic or atomic nation -- the party (PPM). As for the ideals of freedom and liberty, they are in this prenatal stage inconceivable.

But one might say, public liberties, freedom of opinion and of expression particularly are flouted. To this I answer by asking in turn the following question: What is the freedom of the hungry man who cannot find salaried work, of the ill person who does not get relief, of the ignoramus who is prisoner of his own ignorance? It does not exist, this freedom. It is a caper brandished by the demagogues whose aim is to mislead people through borrowed ill concepts. No, it does not exist. This hungry man who suffers and who is ignorant, I say that he is subjugated and that he is held in a condition of human indignity. We must endeavor to create the social and economic conditions of this liberty, so dear to us [so one day the average Mauritanian] may say "yes" or "no" knowledgeably.

Of course, Ould Daddah in his last sentence seems mistakenly to interpret freedom and liberty as the simple prerogative of saying yes or no. Such, however, is not the case. Be that as it may, the President reiterates his beliefs in freedom and in the full participation of the citizen, whatever his sex or social condition, in the politics of Mauritania, but only when a true nation is created in Mauritania; this, he believes, is a long and tedious process:

Our final objective? To transform our archaically structured society into a modern society that will have been capable of preserving the intrinsic virtues of our people. Such fundamental mutation will only be realized in the forthcoming years, more precisely, in the forthcoming decades.

It is believed that upon his accession to the leadership of his country, Moktar Ould Daddah had a sketchy mental blueprint for his country and his people. Timidly at first and with a certain amount of compromise which he deemed indispensable but for which he drew severe criticism by the more impatient segment of the population sharing his views of a homogeneous Mauritania, he later grew more assertive as he learned to grasp and utilize power. Nevertheless, in his utilization of power he has never, thus far, transformed it into ruthlessness. Rapidly, through constitutional amendments and the legal prerogative stemming from them, he transformed the government into a republican regime which strengthened it. As the secretary general of the PPM and head of the government, he manoeuvred and made the existence of rival political parties and opposition groups virtually impossible.

The free existence of parties, symbol of classical democracy, must be prohibited for reasons that I have lengthily explained. This is why the National Political Bureau has proposed in the course of the meeting . . . of the National Assembly to institutionalize the PPM, which will thus become the only Mauritanian political party (and this is to bring about an amendment to our 1961 constitution, art. 9). This decision is a turning point in the political history of our country. Both officers and party militants will demonstrate their ability in this new orientation and make out of the PPM a true mass party where, from the grass roots to the top, free discussion will exist, limited only by the final decision of the majority of the members.

In other words, Ould Daddah following the examples of Guinea and Mali, in particular, believes in a dictatorship of the party, or to put it kindly, in single-party democracy the decisions of which are autocratically applied. Ould Daddah relishes quoting President Nassir of the United Arab Republic, whom he admired boundlessly. In fact, beginning in 1964, following a *de facto* recognition of Mauritania by the UAR, Nassir has become Ould Daddah's model of leadership. Ould Daddah, without being a demagogue, relentlessly tells his people that with their help he will build a Mauritania where goodness, happiness, and ease will prevail.

But, some may ask, who will lead [this] country to this [garden of] Eden? A dictator with boundless powers who would impose his will on the people? Dictators do exist around the world, this is true. But I know that in Mauritania an aspirant dictator would be doomed to failure.

The President of the I.R.M., secretary general of the PPM, holds, in fact, important political and constitutional powers. As long as he will hold them, he will be inspired by a single will -- to substitute to the man that he is and that his successor will be a responsible team, veritable dorsal spine of the country.

Such remarks and many others indicate the President's resignation to the fact that his position is not a permanent one. In fact, he told this author in answer to a question that he "will gladly leave the Presidency when the people [one must understand the Party] will have decided that I have accomplished my task."

Indubitably, Ould Daddah believes that democracy is the privilege of the developed nations and autocracy that of the underdeveloped ones. He also hints that totalitarianism is not all evil and that in some instances it is indispensable to a responsible leadership. As a good Muslim, however, and, therefore, a believer in the spirit of ijma' -- be it a restricted one -- he rejects personal dictatorship while favoring the party dictatorship which, in a Muslim context, is the dictatorship of ijma' -- of the community or its representatives. Indeed, as Ibn Khaldun would say, "The 'assabyyah [association of men for mutual assistance] fulfills the wise purpose of God for their survival and preservation of the species"; without the help of the community, therefore, what God has willed for the populations by them as his vice-regents, could not be perfect.

Briefly, the task that is expected of us demands a party the prime concern of which is to officer the masses who have become in the industrialized countries as well as in underdeveloped [ones] a determinant political factor.

It [our task] demands methods, not totalitarian [per se] but authoritarian [thus restricting the concept of political participation as conceived in the West], borrowing, but after thought [and necessary modification], certain methods used in the totalitarian countries.

This apologetic of Ould Daddah's concept of political power is, indeed, indicative of his character and upbringing. It may be said that he is a utilitarian, but an Islamic one, as a wise leader he seeks support for his actions in an attempt to prevent his own downfall; as a Muslim leader, he seeks the sanction of the ijma' because through popular consent even a wrong is right. Indeed, Islam holds that God does not allow decisions made by the totality of his community or its representatives to be wrong.

What can one think of Ould Daddah's political philosophy? Will it have any effect on the shape of the developing political system in Mauritania? It is not our intent in this paper to discuss the relationship of ideology to politics, although such an answer seems imperative at this point. Nevertheless, such an answer will hopefully emerge within our evaluation of Ould Daddah's thinking and action in the context of Mauritania's political community. In Ould Daddah's attempt at creating a nation and, given the difficulties he has encountered in this endeavor, he came to distinguish between his country's natural community and its politically and legally defined community -- the former including but represented by the latter. Though a nationalist fundamentally, Ould Daddah rejects the nineteenth-century nationalist concept of the legitimate rights of the entire natural community to government. As a twentieth-century nationalist, he seeks to shape and adapt the primitive segments of the natural community for full political participation in political affairs. As an African nationalist, however, he recognized only that segment of the elite which shares his views or which happens to be in a better position of power, denying their political rights to the

others. He considers the primitive segments of the Mauritanian society as having once been ideal societies; modern circumstances, however, have made them liabilities rather than assets. It is because of the presence of these liabilities that Ould Daddah refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the opposing elites. It may be argued that, assuming Ould Daddah is convinced of the rightness of his policies, he underestimates the intelligence of the primitive segment of his citizens and their abilities to distinguish right from wrong. Thus, in a doctrinaire fashion, he refuses to expose these "minors" to the baneful effects of the opposition to protect them, as it were, from succumbing to its evil. His beliefs in man and his free will appear in this fashion diminished, and his constant reference to Mauritania as being "the land of Man" seems meaningless. On the other hand, if we were to assume that Ould Daddah is not necessarily convinced that the opposition's policies would not be at least as positive as his in creating a nation, then we could find no justification to this opposing elite and we would term him a dictator.

From a practical and utilitarian point of view, the immediate aim of his selective democracy, that of insuring the rapid creation of a nation out of a primitive society, is easily understandable if not acceptable.

CHAPTER 12

WOMEN IN AFRICAN ISLAMIC LITERATURE

Lyndon Harries

The term literature in the present context is taken to refer to texts either from the oral tradition or from the literate tradition. The latter includes modern works in a European language, of which there are at present only a few, and traditional works emanating from an African society, notably in Swahili and Hausa, where there has long been a literate tradition.

The greater part of oral tradition in Islamic Africa is still unrecorded. Even so the corpus already available is much larger than what exists in the literate tradition, but any comparison between texts from the oral tradition and, say, modern works in a European language by Muslim writers, is likely to be irrelevant. The latter attempt to provide a unified work of art. This is also true of traditional poetry in the vernacular, e.g. Swahili poetry, in which the written word is meant to be a complete, unified work upon which the musical accompaniment is superimposed, a melody freely based on some Arabian modal scale. The author and the performer are usually different persons. But texts from African oral tradition reflect only one aspect of the original creation. Poetry from the oral tradition is usually a combination of literary and of some other art like song or/and dance.

For the oral tradition, terms like "poetry," "literature," or "poetic function" have to be defined with reference to the particular genre of a particular work. Generally, in referring to such works we use much too loosely terms that belong to the literary criticism of works from the modern literate tradition. For such terms to be valid in the traditional African context, they must be capable of translation into the relevant African language, but far too often they are not. Even the use of the word "poetry" has to be qualified when referring to works from African oral tradition.

Literature has always been the dominant art of the Muslim world. The one great contribution of the Arabs to Muslim civilization was their literary tradition, which includes the Koran. For this reason we might expect to find strongly contrastive features between African Islamic literature and African Islamic oral tradition, but this is not the case. Both the written and oral literatures from Islamic Africa share many similar stylistic and contextual features. The reasons for this lie in basic attitudes of Muslim society found also in African tribal society. For example, the Muslim hates change. For the Muslim, the best Islam was in the beginning. By looking back, by changing to the ways of the first Muslims -- the equivalent in this connection of the tribal elders -- by upholding the tradition of the

ancients and by rejecting innovation, the qualities of the early better representatives of the community would be preserved in contemporary society.

As Grunebaum has written of Islamic literature after A.D. 1000, "In terms of achievement this leaning toward the past, this craving for the static, are expressed in depreciation of originality. Innovation became less important than formulation; wording outranked meaning."¹

Grunebaum's comments about Arabic literature apply equally to African oral tradition and also to Islamic literature in an African language, like Berber, Hausa, or Swahili. For instance, he writes, "Arabic literature never had been at its best when individualizing its figures . . . Only rarely did the writer round off his observations to achieve the portrayal of a character who would act out the qualities ascribed to him by his inventor."² In this connection the present writer has previously noted that

African folk-tales may sometimes be about ordinary people and everyday African things, but the characterization is presented in such bold relief that no room is left for the subtleties normally associated with literary presentation. The narrator is hardly ever involved in what he relates. Behind any Cinderella in African folk-tales it is difficult to imagine any other Cinderellas. One would be enough if she were delineated as a real person, but this seldom happens. T. S. Eliot's maxim that humankind cannot bear very much reality seems equally true of Africans in relation to their oral tradition.³

So any criticism that this discussion of women in African Islamic literature does not provide the reader with a description of individual women becomes void. Individualization of the female character simply does not occur in African Islamic literature, neither in the written nor in the oral tradition. The women are types of the good or the bad. Within the tradition of Islam this springs from the Muslim habit in Arabic literature of dissecting the human character into individual qualities such as pride and humility, liberality and miserliness, truthfulness and dishonesty, which were discussed one after another, preferably in pairs of opposites. "Individual man or woman was interesting merely as an illustration of a general observation which was owed to the sagacity of one of the wise."⁴

Similarly, in African oral tradition most characters represent a particular trait. The strong moralising element which is a feature both of Islamic and of African tribal tradition partly accounts for a hierarchy of types whereby the triumph of any one conventionally acceptable trait over its opposite is assured in predictable and, at least to the Western reader, rather monotonous fashion.

1. Gustave E. von Grunebaum, Medieval Islam (Chicago, 1953), 241.

2. Ibid., 223.

3. Lyndon Harries, "Vernacular Literature in African Language Teaching," Proceedings of Conference on African Literature (Evanston, 1966), 69.

4. Grunebaum, Islam, 225.

Women as represented in Islamic literature in an African vernacular are anonymous. Though the women of the Prophet's family are known by name, each name identifies a prototype of Islamic womanhood. Each possesses all of the womanly virtues. Within the Islamic oral tradition of Africa, women are equally anonymous. Though the female characters of a local folk-tale may each be given a name, the name merely identifies a particular type of woman. Only the prototypes have all of the virtues, but a local folk-type may possess more than one of the vices which one shining good trait in the person of a hero or heroine is able to overcome.

This anonymity or impersonality springs from social custom, whether Islamic or tribal. Islamic convention forbade the use of real names of womenfolk in Mohammedan times. Slave girls might be mentioned; ladies never. Although the rigor of this convention relaxed as time went on, it should be remembered that African Islamic literature is related to the earliest Mohammedan period of literary creation, notably the earliest biographies of the Prophet and his Four Companions, designated as Maghazi literature.⁵ Love poetry resembles that of classical, that is pre-Islamic, poetry whereby the beloved's physical charms are praised in consecutive sequence from head to pretty toes. Although acquaintance with a single poem of this type is an intriguing and happy experience, further acquaintance with other poems of the same type from different areas results in the disappointing conclusion that it is the same woman whose charms the poets set forth with, on the whole, comparable skill and similar conventions. When a more modern African poet in the Islamic tradition writes charming love lyrics expressing personal sentiment for the beloved, we are indebted more to the invention of a poet who is an African than to Arabian Islamic convention.

Whereas African oral tradition excludes detailed description of the female anatomy -- most African peoples have a strong tradition of modesty in this respect -- there is much the same convention of anonymity in representing female characters in tales and in poetry. Although a woman may be given a name, it is usually a common personal name enabling the hearer merely to identify the character. The names of women in African Islamic oral tradition are well known only in the sense that they are in fact common names and not because of any individual memorable characteristics identifying the holder of a particular name as an unusual woman. In Islamic African convention it was contrary to custom to attract public attention to the women. Women saints and teachers might be given recognition, but the average African Muslim preferred his womenfolk to stay home and live an inconspicuous life.

In the development of new ideas and patterns of behavior following the industrial revolution in Africa, it is a commonplace that women remain far behind their menfolk. It still remains true that the majority of African women are illiterate. As with the men, many women who know how to write cannot or do not write in their own language, because their education was in some other language, e.g. Arabic, English, or French. The education of women started later than that of men in most African countries, and the Western education of Muslim girls was last of all. The time factor is important in partly accounting for the comparative lack of women's names in any

5. Lyndon Harries, Swahili Poetry (Oxford, 1962), 24-27.

bibliography of modern African literature. In North Africa most modern writing in French is Algerian, due chiefly to the longer period of colonisation in Algeria (from 1830) as compared to French colonisation, say, in Morocco (from 1912). The time factor is important also in accounting for the emergence of women writers who take up the feminist cause. Only those with a fairly long contact with Western society can make comparisons between the status of women in the relevant countries. There are no feminists represented in African oral tradition.

The writings of the Algerian woman, Djamila Debeche, are less important for their literary value than for their sociological significance. Her novels, Aziza and Leila, jeune fille d'Algérie,⁶ have implications of which not even the author may have been aware. She attacks the tradition which places Muslim women of North Africa in subordination first to the father and then to the husband. As Germaine Tillion has shown,⁷ the system of marriage among the endogamous peoples of North and Northwest Africa is in many important respects in direct violation of the teaching of the Koran. Neither Djamila Debeche nor Marguerite Taos, a Berber Christian writer,⁸ who expresses the need for female emancipation from the same traditions, are concerned with restoring or implementing what the Koran actually teaches on such subjects as female inheritance. Both writers are more concerned with promoting feminism in the Western sense than with restoring orthodox Islamic practice to the marriage institution among Algerian Muslims.

The tribal structure of most peoples in the Maghrib is based upon safeguarding the paternal line. The ideal marriage is for a man to marry the daughter of his paternal, not his maternal, uncle. A Berber proverb from Morocco says that the people love this type of marriage just as they love to eat the meat from their own cattle. The system excludes female inheritance, and this is in violation of the teaching of the fourth chapter of the Koran. It is forbidden by the Koran for a brother and sister to marry into the same family, but this is practiced frequently in Muslim families of North Africa, especially among the Kabyles of Algeria. The tribal structure is endangered where female inheritance is allowed or where women marry "strangers," i.e., men not of the paternal lineage.

Yet, since independence in Morocco and Algeria, the Koranic law has been made obligatory for all Muslims, a revolutionary fact of great sociological importance which, if the law is observed, is bound to affect the social structure. The strong probability is that the Muslim law concerning marriage and inheritance will continue to be ignored wherever it conflicts with established practice, not least because the introduction of obligatory adherence to Muslim law was more a gesture of loyalty to the Faith than to the particular provisions of the Islamic legal system. Adherence to Islam covers a variety of beliefs and practices, not all of which conform to the precepts and principles of orthodox religion.

6. Djamila Debeche, Aziza (Alger, n.d.); Djamila Debeche, Leila, jeune fille d'Algérie (Alger, 1955).
7. Germaine Tillion, Le Harem et les Cousins (Paris, 1966).
8. Marie-Louise Amrouche, Jacinthe Noire (Paris, 1947); Marie-Louise Amrouche, "Rue des Tambourins," Table Ronde (1960).

The underlying problems of social change are not dealt with adequately by modern African writers in the Muslim context, either because such problems are too complex or because the writers may not themselves fully understand them. It is much easier to attack some abuse of the system, such as forced marriage, but in doing so they are not engaged in pioneer reform. The novel, Sous l'orage, by Seydou Badian Kouyate from Mali, for instance, deals with forced marriage.⁹ He makes an eloquent appeal for female emancipation in a matter where, in most African Muslim countries, women already have a large measure of freedom. Forced marriages are rapidly becoming the exception, and indeed a case could be made for showing that even in traditional society most marriages between Muslims were by consent. The freedom to choose or accept a partner by consent is now so widespread in Muslim countries that a book like Sous l'orage, written as recently as 1957, already appears outdated. Public opinion, even in the author's own society or country, is largely already on his side.

But in any case, forced marriage is not a specifically Islamic practice. In dealing with modern writings by Muslims or in a Muslim setting, it is important to distinguish between practices that are Islamic in origin and those that are tribal in origin. Even within Islam, Muslims sometimes identify as Islamic practice customs that were never specifically enjoined in the Koran. The practice of circumcision, for example, is not mentioned in the Quran and yet many believe that it is of Islamic religious origin. The wearing of the veil is mentioned only incidentally in the Koran and is prescribed specifically only for the women of the Prophet's family. Public prayer, according to the Koran, has priority over the observance of the Ramadan fast (certain classes of people have a dispensation from fasting in Ramadan), but in North Africa particularly many people consider themselves good Muslims without ever going to the mosque to pray, and yet they put into prison any Muslim who is known openly to have chosen not to keep the fast. In North Africa, as elsewhere in tribal Africa, the subordinate position of women itself, where it still exists, may not be of Islamic origin, but derives from ancient pre-Islamic social institutions that have become part of the tribal system.

The dichotomy between orthodox Islam and tribal belief and practice is evident in African oral tradition. This is in contrast to the fairly uniform orthodoxy of literature in an African language, notably Swahili or Hausa. Swahili poetry originated in that part of Swahili society which, although ethnically partly Bantu, was essentially Arab-Islamic in culture as well as in many aspects of social structure. The question of the conflict of Islamic and Bantu culture in social institutions hardly arose, and Islamic law was normally recognized. Where non-Islamic practice is considered in Swahili literature it is invariably from the orthodox point of view.¹⁰ The literature was instructional, and people who heard the poetry performed were familiarised with orthodox belief and practice. The prototypes of Islamic womanhood, like Hadija and Fatima, members of the Prophet's family, are known to Swahili women as women to be respected whose good lives they must try to emulate.

9. Seydou Badian, Sous l'orage (Avignon, 1957).

10. See Harries, Swahili Poetry, 226-232.

The nineteenth-century Swahili woman poet, Mwana Kupona, wrote a well known poem on the wifely duty. She wrote it knowing that she had a fatal disease and addressed it to her daughter. It is as orthodox a work as any Muslim religious leader would like to read or hear. The poem was written in the style of the best passages in the Book of Proverbs attributed to Solomon, which can be paraphrased thus:

My daughter, come and sit beside me -- the end is not far off -- receive instruction more precious than jewels, profitable both for this world and the next. For man's life is but a vain shadow; yet if thou hold fast to the counsels of righteousness, thou wilt pass on to a better life hereafter.

Professor Alice Werner wrote of Mwana Kupona's poem:

Religious duties are dealt with at some length, and the poem removes some misconceptions, still occasionally repeated, as to the position of Swahili women. It has been said that they are "remarkably indifferent to their religion and often unable to repeat the Fatiha," but although that may be so in some cases, this poem and my experience support a contrary view. Swahili women whom I met were extremely well instructed in matters of the Faith.¹¹

Mwana Kupona was not versed in precise Islamic theology, and her poem illustrates how even in an orthodox environment popular belief may have no justification in the Koran. On this Professor Werner writes:

There is no warrant in the Quran for the statement (stanzas 26-27) that a wife's chance of entry into Paradise is dependent upon her husband's will, though there appears to be a popular belief to that effect, as, for instance, an old dame at Lamu on learning that I was not married, asked, "Then how do you expect to get into Paradise?" though in that case there was no actual suggestion that a husband could keep me out, if he so desired. Indeed, the notion is distinctly negated by the Quran in such passages as "Allah has promised to the believing men and the believing women . . . goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode" (Quran ix.72, xii.23, etc.).¹²

Popular belief has not affected belief in the fundamental doctrines of Islam among the Swahili, but elsewhere this has happened, and the women have been the most fervid and unknowing promoters of religious heresy.

The relationship between Islam and African culture found its expression in Swahili life in a remarkable and, for Africa, quite a unique unity of culture. Along the East African coast Islam did not penetrate existing communities but created a new community in which its members at all levels were satisfied with the distinctive ethos of their common life. They did not seek to expand the range of their

11. The Advice of Mwana Kupona upon the Wifely Duty, Alice Werner and William Hichens, trans. (Medstead, 1934), 23.

12. Ibid., 25-26.

culture among neighboring Bantu societies. Any absorptions from Bantu life were either selectively made and remoulded to harmonize with the basic assumptions of Islam or, if contrary to Islam, were allowed to exist parallel to the Islamic system.

Both oral and written Swahili literature sprang from this unified culture, and the women were able to contribute to both. In places like Lamu, Mombasa, and Zanzibar women poets wrote and still write within the framework of orthodox Islam. The neighboring Bantu societies were never completely Islamized, and their oral tradition has scarcely any traces of Islamic influence, except where they have borrowed directly from Swahili tradition. For the most part this oral tradition is related to traditional, non-Islamic culture. Unlike the Swahili literate tradition, the women are represented in this tradition only by tales and short snatches of song, and never by extended works of poetic creation. It is a general characteristic of African oral tradition that the men are the creators of extended poetry and the women, while often performing work of the male poet's original creation, create works of a much less complex nature.

In West Africa the tension between Islam and African culture was much more apparent than among the Swahili people. For four centuries up to the beginning of the nineteenth century a series of reforming Muslims repeatedly sought to bring about the acceptance and practice of orthodox Islam by the Sudanese rulers and their subjects, and thereby to destroy pagan and syncretistic practices. In Hausa country, according to Waldman,¹³

Whenever the chronicles say that Islam flourished . . . it is most likely that the reigning sarki showed himself willing to encourage, and possibly to protect, the presence of Islam and of learned men in his State and in his entourage, than that any extensive conversion took place among his subjects.

The Fulani jihad of 1804 was a reforming movement led by Usman dan Fodio who not only brought most of the Hausa Emirates under the control of his followers, but also initiated an important literary movement to restore some measure of orthodoxy among people nominally Muslim.¹⁴ It is said that there are current in manuscript, and also in a lively oral tradition, some 700 poems attributed to Usman in Arabic, Hausa, and also in the Fulani language, but their systematic collection and interpretation is still only in an early stage.

This literature originated in the continuing necessity, from the Muslim point of view, to reform not only political abuses, but also social and religious practice. Such a necessity never arose in Swahili life, so that Swahili literature, apart from being in earlier times a useful means of instruction, was the creation of people who like to write. They wrote within the fixed conventions of prosodic form, but a borrowed medium became the means for a creative art form. Swahili poetry became an expression of Swahili life. It is doubtful,

13. M. R. Waldman, "The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment," Journal of African History, VI, 3 (1965), 333-335.

14. For the movement led by Usman dan Fodio see primarily the writings of M. G. Smith, and also of M. Hiskett and A. Bivar in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,

however, if Hausa Islamic poetry ever became the spontaneous expression of the Hausa way of life. This may account for the comparative absence of Hausa women poets within the Islamic context.¹⁵ Hausa women are best represented in oral tradition, a tradition that relates primarily, not to Islamic, but to tribal or local belief and practice. The same can be said of the literary situation in other African countries even where Islam has official status.

Although Islamic knowledge is greatly esteemed, non-Islamic cults still flourish among the Hausa. The pre-Fulani cult of spirit-possession (bori) in which the spirits are called and entertained by singing their praises, has many devotees, especially among women. The practice of roko, eulogy, praise-singing, among the Hausa is, according to M. G. Smith, "an informal regulative institution through which praise or shame are distributed."¹⁶ He writes:

The female ceremonial of bori expresses most clearly the values basic to roko. It does this by personalizing these values, together with their relations and appropriate behaviour, in spirit form . . . The values expressed in bori are basic to roko because they are basic to Hausa society, and because roko is the institutionalized mode of their expression. Like the gods of Greece, the Hausa bori are amoral representations, but there is no possibility of doubting their character as personifications of social values.¹⁷

Smith has also noted that the exclusion of religious leaders and Koranic scholars from the category of persons at whom roko may be directed shows that the valuations which this institution expresses are independent of those of Islam. Even so, among the Hausa it is of interest that bori is not universally regarded as being in conflict with Islam. The situation is typical of other cults in Islamic societies which, from the orthodox viewpoint are unacceptable, but which are basic to the relevant culture. Death of the cult means a gain for orthodoxy, but a loss for the particular African society.

In northwest Africa the cult of the marabouts or "saints" is anathema to orthodox Muslim theologians. In Morocco especially women often know more about their local marabout than they do about the Prophet Mohammed. Berber tales told by the women often concern the behavior or actions of their local "saint." Montet has written: "A marabout attached to a specific place appears there like the right arm of God, to the exclusion of the most renowned saints of Islam."¹⁸

In the sixth century of the Christian era, Procopius made mention of the female prophets of North Africa.¹⁹ The multiplicity of marabouts, male and female, reflects the absence of any centralized

15. Nana, of the family of the Wazir of Sokoto at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was one of the few women in Hausa country to gain a reputation for poetry in the literate tradition.
16. M. G. Smith, "The Social Functions and Meaning of Hausa Praise-Singing," *Africa*, XXVII, 1 (1957), 27.
17. *Ibid.*, 41.
18. Edouard Montet, *Le Cult des Saints Musulmans dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Genève, 1909).
19. See *Procopius* (works of), ex recensione G. Dinsdorf, trans. from Greek to Latin by C. Maltretus (Bonnae, 1833), I, 443.

religious authority establishing a "communion of saints" -- "It is the voice of the people which beatifies and canonizes,"²⁰ and the consensus is strongly dependent on the beliefs of women. Moulay Idris, founder of the ancient town of Fes, receives at least as much veneration as the Prophet, and Sidi Abdul-Kadr El-Jilani, founder of the Quadriyya Order in Morocco, is considered more venerable than even Moulay Idris.

In Popular belief everything is permitted to the object of one's veneration. In orthodox Islam asceticism is not much in favor, for the Koran is generally opposed to self-abnegation. North African marabouts vary from the most ascetic to the most debauched. There are "saints" austere and "saints" obscene; there are "saints" who are venerated by Muslim, Christian, and Jew alike. Their enormous prestige has enabled them to play an important political role in strengthening local sentiment against foreign domination or, less frequently, in supporting the foreign government to effect particular aims. Even with the coming of independence, West African governments have to remember the potential influence of the marabouts. In Senegal, for instance, the history of the Mourids, a sect founded by the marabout El-Haji Bamba, the grandfather of the present marabout, El-Haji Fali-lou Mbacke, is remembered by those in power. Bamba's initiative in starting a movement the main principle of which was to combine work (the production of groundnuts) with prayer resulted in his imprisonment because his growing influence worried the French authorities. Today, President Senghor is careful to honor the annual commemoration of Bamba's death by his presence at the religious celebration in Tuba, where Bamba lived. The Wolof Mourids regard Bamba's representative, the present marabout, as their religious head and give him the respect and honor, to say nothing of dues, which in a more orthodox environment are awarded to the Prophet Mohammed himself.

On the other hand there are tribes where the marabouts are despised, and this appears in oral tradition as, for example, among the Ida and Blal of southern Morocco where in tale and proverb the marabouts are satirized and mocked.²¹ Both the veneration and the mockery are expressions of popular belief which in neither case has its origin in orthodox religion.

The voice of Islamic orthodoxy is invariably the voice of a man, not of a woman, because in Islam only the men become scholars and theologians. However, this voice is seldom heard in rural areas where marabout-worship is practiced within the Islamic context. Orthodoxy is not the measure of a man's excellence as a poet so long as he believes in God and vaguely in His Prophet. He can still express the highest values of his community even though those values are not likely to win favor in every respect with the more orthodox. Extended poetry by men in the Tamazight dialect of Berber, for instance, deals with such subjects as the general decline in modern religious observance, general religious fundamentals such as the inevitability of death, the fight for independence by an Islamic people, etc., and although there are references to Koranic texts, the poet does not have

20. Montet, *Cult*, 25.

21. See Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad, *Les Gnomes de Siti Abd er-Rahman el Medjedhoub*, H. de Castries, trans. and ed. (Paris, 1896); R. Basset, "Les Dictons Satiriques Attribués à Sidi Ahmed ben Yousef," *Journal Asiatique* (Sept.-Oct. 1890).

to be an orthodox Muslim in every particular to create work appreciated by his hearers.²² The general effect is religious and conservative, protecting the limited ideal and helping to prevent a wider departure from conventional religious behavior. The people themselves do not regard these poets as primarily religious poets, because the religious element is taken for granted, and they are more interested in references to current events and behavior. In some instances the specifically religious poems are a useful stand-by for instant reproduction.

The association of women with action songs is itself an indication of the contextual character of oral tradition by women. Whereas men create works in which the subject matter is displaced, i.e., it may have no immediate reference to the time or occasion of its creation, texts from women generally have a direct relationship with a contemporary activity. Women do create praise songs, but, apart from these, most songs by women spring from some solitary occupation like grinding by hand. In Islamic African society, especially among the more prosperous families, communal work activities tend to exclude female participation. In theory Muslim women are excluded from communal work on the farms. The poetry of men often includes the theme that woman's place is in the home bringing up the children, not on the farm working with the men. Where Muslims can afford to dispense with their wives' help in outside activities they will do so, but in fact, even among the more prosperous, women do take a share in what needs to be done outside the dwelling place. Even so, it is a woman's part. She does not do the work of a man. Even when the activity is the same, as in weaving, there are clear indications of the division of labor between the sexes. Among the Hausa, for instance, the women use a different type of loom from the men. Men dig up the groundnuts, but women separate the nuts from the leaves and rocks.

The division of labor is not, of course, the same in every area, but traditionally there are fixed limits on what women are expected to do. With modern change, women share in activities promoted to further their education in the Western sense, and songs are introduced as an accompaniment to their efforts in sewing, care of the children, and so on. These songs have a direct relationship to traditional women's songs although the activity may not be exactly the same. Even with modern changes, women's oral tradition is not something apart from their daily life, but springs directly from it. Its inspiration is not primarily from Islam, but from life itself. Since the life itself may be more closely related to tribal values than to Islamic values, it is doubtful if oral tradition by women in an Islamic society can in most instances be termed "African Islamic Literature" at all. It belongs more properly to the general field of tribal oral tradition in which women have their special part to play and in which they represent others as types of the bad or the good. Their interpretation of a "good Muslim" is not usually according to religious behavior in the objective sense. Women are not represented objectively, because the yardstick is usually the normal standard of tribal behavior. Oral tradition, after all, is an expression of tribal life, a much wider manifestation of human activity than that in which Islam may have only nominal adherence.

22. Personal communication from Jeanette Harries, University of Wisconsin.



